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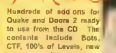
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JBC, July-August 1998 24,351

Editorial



I like the month of May. For one thing, I get to celebrate my 21st birthday again. Then there's the FA Cup Final. Jossling with the big day at Wembley there's the World of Amiga show, complete with a big screen for us to watch the match on. Oh, and summer comes around too, which is nice. Apart from those of you in the Southern Hemisphere (although it will probably be your summertime when this reaches you). So what's my point? What am I going on about? Don't ask me, I'm just the Editor. They pay me to do all this stuff, tinker with all the latest toys and tell you about them. I suppose I'm just full of the joys of spring.

Tony Horgan, Editor

Feature

24 Game Creation

Now there's no excuse for not making your own games! Not only have we got all the development software you could wish for on the cover disks and CD, we've also been chinwagging with the professionals to find out the secret to knocking out award-winning games. Taking you through the complete process, this will have you chomping at the bit to do it yourself.



Feature

33 Spam Spam Spam

It's pink and soft and smells a bit funny. But enough about Russ Cox's problems, what about Spam? It promises riches beyond belief, the date of your dreams, even the opportunity to perpetuate the misery by bulk emailing millions of people around the world for \$100.

It can drive you mad, and if you're not careful, probably will do very soon. If you're to retain your sanity you should read up on it as much as possible.



Feature

36 World of Amiga Show Guide

The time is almost upon us. This year's World of Amiga show looks like being one of the most exciting in recent years with an impressive line up of new products on show and on sale.

Get yourself prepared with our guide to all the key attractions and a complete floor plan so you won't get lost between the bar and the Gents. Find out who will be where, what will be hot and what bargains you should look out for on page 36.



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There's a lot of game creation theme to the CD this month. As well as the full Reality Game Engine there's advanced development tools, SEUCK, and all the latest shareware, reader contributions, samples, mods and utilities - plus an MPEG audio recording of Petro's speech at a recent Amiga show.

18 Reality Game Engine

All you need to make your own Amiga games: the Reality Game Engine is here and fully functional. Created with ease of use in mind, it could be your first step towards producing that award-winning game.

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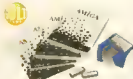
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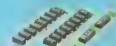
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41200 2-MB RAM

1MByte 32-bit zero wait state Fast-RAM
Auto-recharge battery clock
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Fully auto-configuring Chip-RAM
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Fits easily into the CPU socket
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Increases the speed of your CDTV
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Auto-recharge battery clock
Fits easily into the CPU socket
Fully Auto-configuring RAM
Increases the speed of your CDTV
CDTV 1MB RAM ... £49.95

41200 1MB Chip RAM

External CD-ROM Drive
Squirrel PCMCIA SCSI Interface
Chaos Engine CD-ROM
Oscar/Diggers CD-ROM

4x External CD-ROM ... £119.95
8x External CD-ROM ... £149.95
12x External CD-ROM ... £169.95
24x External CD-ROM ... £199.95
32x External CD-ROM ... £229.95

41200 1MB Chip RAM

4x Internal CD-ROM ... £54.95
8x Internal CD-ROM ... £84.95
12x Internal CD-ROM ... £104.95
24x Internal CD-ROM ... £134.95
32x Internal CD-ROM ... £164.95
CD-ROM comes with 3 way SCSI cable

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£79.95

SQUIRREL PCMCIA SCSI

Squirrel PCMCIA SCSI Interface
External Power Supply Unit
Chaos Engine CD-ROM
Oscar/Diggers CD-ROM

41200 1MB Chip RAM

1MB of Chip RAM
Mini Mega Chip ... £99.95

41200 1MB Chip RAM

Factory installed 2MB RAM
Auto-recharge battery clock
Fully auto-configuring RAM
Works with all A500's WB1.3 and above
A500 2MB RAM ... £49.95

41200 1MB Chip RAM

1MB CHIP RAM
Fits into the A500+ trapdoor
Fully auto-configuring Chip RAM
Works with all A500+
A500 1MB CHIP RAM ... £19.95

41200 1MB Chip RAM

1MB CHIP RAM
Auto-recharging battery clock
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Fully auto-configuring Chip RAM
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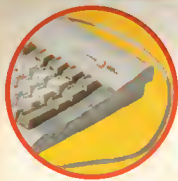
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News

Worldwide 68060 Shortage

Products utilising the top of the range Motorola 68060 processor are suffering delays due to availability problems. Phase 5 were forced to delay the launch of the '060 variant of the Blizzard PPC card for several weeks due to this shortage, and their next batch of 68060 chips is not expected to last beyond their current backlog of orders. While small stocks of 68060 chips apparently remain in the hands of Amiga companies such as Paxtron in the USA and ACT in Germany the shortages are being felt throughout the industry, with 68060 based products becoming very hard to find.

CU Amiga Magazine has been hearing numerous complaints in the last few weeks from companies who are struggling to fulfil demand for these processors, and from end users who have been unable to get the accelerator cards they want. According to Motorola they actually have large stocks of the wafers but are not able to prioritise the assembly of the wafers into cases. The changeover of the LC and EC com-



▲ The CyberStorm PPC card, with one of the increasingly rare 68060 CPUs

ponents to spare 0.42 fabrication has caused problems in the normal process of assembly for the RC components used in computers, and recent large orders for the cut down parts from industry users of the '060 have overstretched the capacity of the casing facilities.

A spokesman for the company assured CU Amiga Magazine that they were trying to break the backlog as soon as possible, and that phase 5, as the largest user of the CPU in Germany, were top priority when the chips start leaving the factory again.

MOD turns to Amiga

The Royal Navy has awarded a contract to Thron electronics for 20 on ship weather satellite download systems after the company's Amiga based proposal beat five other tenders from companies using Macintosh or PC hardware. The Amiga based systems will consist of A4000 motherboards in 19" rack mountings with Ram, hard drives, CyberStorm '060 cards and Picasso 4 graphics cards.

The Amiga based bid won because the system simply outperformed the other ones.

The naval contractees were apparently impressed by the ability of the Amiga system to smoothly multitask the satellite downlink, 3D weather mapping and printer/plotter control, and were particularly taken by the fact that the Amiga based systems can completely reset themselves within 20 seconds.

White Knight Technologies have been asked to supply the hardware, although current shortages in '060 cards and A4000s has made the task harder than they had hoped.

And, finally, NetConnect v2

Active Technologies will finally release the CD version of NetConnect v2 in May.

There are many changes and additions since the previous release,

not least that it will ship with a new TCP stack called "Genesis". Genesis is based on the original AmiTCP Professional and will allow dial-up Internet access as well as local area

networking or both (due to its unique ability to open multiple interfaces).

X-Arc is another new edition for version 2. Similar to WinZip on

Windows of Stuffit on the Mac, it brings advanced archive management to the Amiga via a central control interface. Download an archive from the Internet and it is automatically extracted into the X-Arc main window where you can add, view, copy or run any of the files from within the archive.

NetConnect is available for £59.95 from Active Technologies. Genesis and X-Arc may also be purchased separately. Call Active for further information on 01325 480116.



Seminars at WOA98

Amiga Inc., the Industry Council Open Amiga (ICOA) and AmigaSoft UK will be holding a series of technical and non-technical Developers seminars over both days of the WOA98 Show.

ICOA members will be admitted free to the seminars, while a nominal fee will apply to anybody else. Bookings can be made to andrew@uk.amigasoc.org. Use the same address if you are interested in holding a seminar yourself.



It's Siamese Systems, now

g and potential customers of the Siamese System will have a new party to talk to - Siamese Systems Ltd. of Bedfordshire. The original publisher of the Siamese System, HIO, has ceased trading. Siamese Systems is honouring its previous customer obligations and consists of assembly the same personnel with new contact information.

The first move of the newly formed Siamese Systems is the wide availability release of Siamese Remote Amiga v2.1 serial edition, available from Siamese Systems direct or several dealers world-wide (£29.95 / \$49.95 US / 79DM). Siamese remote is basically the

full Siamese 2.5 software with the TCP/IP stack removed. It has the full reprogrammable capabilities, but functions only over a serial connection.

The idea of the release is to act as a power user's rival to current Amiga PC networking solutions and as a way in to the Siamese system for those who aren't sure what they are getting. Purchasers of the Siamese remote release CD from Siamese systems will be entitled to a full refund against a purchase price of the v2.60 pro Siamese Ethernet system, which is up to 50 times faster than serial in certain operations. Siamese Systems Ltd can be reached on 01525 211558, or at <http://www.siamese.co.uk>

BoXeR pricing announced

Blittersoft, the UK distributors of the BoXeR AGA motherboard from Index, have announced pricing for the imminent release of the first production run of the latest entry into the Amiga clone market. The pricing has worked out rather higher than initial projected estimates. A bare BoXeR motherboard includes AGA chipset and 2 Megs of Chip (RAM) will be £479.95 inclusive of VAT (just under £410 exclusive). You need to provide the 040 or 060 CPU. Blittersoft have said that they really want to emphasise BoXeR based systems rather than the motherboard as a DIY component, and pricing of their Black Box series of complete sys-

tems brings the value of the BoXeR into a little more perspective. Fully equipped (32 megs RAM, 4 gig HD, 32X CD-ROM, high-density floppy as well as mouse and keyboard in a tower case) the Black Box 040 is projected at £899.95 inclusive, with an 060 model adding £100. Compared to a similarly specced A4000 the prices look rather good, and specs are higher. The BoXeR technology will be on display at the World of Amiga and is expected to ship (both in motherboard and Black Box form) in August of this year. For more info contact Blittersoft on 01908 261468, or at <http://www.blittersoft.com>

Petro Speaks in Finland

At a 98 event organized by the Finnish Amiga Users Group on March 28, was the biggest Amiga event in Finland in years and was often officially described as a Finnish Petro Yltschischenko speech from the show may be heard on this month's CD-ROM, but

more interest was piqued by Petro's unveiling of the New Amiga Hymn, featuring the lyrics "Back for the future". For further information visit Finnish Amiga Users Group's Web Site at <http://betman.pytel.fi/~saku/> or <http://xammia.tytku.fi/saku/>

Petro shows off his new car. ▶



Exploring New Horizons

Designs, the software team working on Explorer 2280 and Memetic are undertaking another project called New Horizons. This is a unique game set in the TWI Universe as their other projects and casts the player in control of a space station.

Current system requirements are Amiga with 020 or better, 6MB RAM, hard drive and a CD-ROM drive. We are also plans to support graphics card, PPC board and possibly even network gaming.

Design require a programmer develop this title. They say, "person we are looking for must have experience in system friendly games programming, GFX support, 3D coding and if

possible TCP/IP support.

Anyone who wants to apply must be able to dedicate a lot of their free time to the project. Information on any previous projects is required. The person will be expected to do the majority of the programming for the game and will also be required to co-ordinate a small group of coders who will help with various tasks."

Anybody interested should contact the team via email at korhonen@netnet.co.uk or via snail mail at: 2260 Designs, 14 Hollywood Crescent, Hart Village, Hertlepool TS27 3BB, ENGLAND. They also have a website at <http://www.users.zetnet.co.uk/korhonen/>

White Knight/PPC trade-in deals

White Knight Technologies, the Amiga specialist and phase 5 dealer, are now offering trade-in and upgrade deals on phase 5's range of Blizzard PPC accelerators for the Amiga 1200. If you already have an 040 or 060 chip, White Knight will supply bare PPC boards for the same price as the LC400 version, ie, the 160MHz PB03 for £235, the 200MHz for £289 and the 240MHz for £355. They will supply the SCSI version at £289 for the 160MHz, £345 for the 200MHz and £409 for the 240MHz. If you have a phase 5 Blizzard

1240 or 1260 accelerator with the CPU soldered-in, you can send the board to White Knight and they will transfer the CPU to a PPC card for a handling charge of £20. They claim a turn around time of 2-3 weeks for this process.

Also White Knight offer trade-in deals to registered owners of Blizzard 1230 cards. They will knock £30 off the price of a PPC board in exchange for a 1230 and £20 pounds for a Blizzard SCSI board.

White Knight may be contacted on 01920 823321.

Made For KiDs

Mystique Corporation International, the host of the Amiga's Premier Children's Site, have overseen the creation of a new felder in Amnet solely for children's software as part of their on-going Made For KiDs campaign. Their own website at <http://www.mystcorp.u-net.com>, features a carefully designed interface to ease the access of this new archive, providing the user with all relevant information and simplifying the download process.

Amiga International and Haage&Partner have both sponsored MystCorp, supporting their efforts to ensure that the Amiga is the computer of choice for children and education. H&P have donated a copy of their StormC and AF have supplied an A4000T to aid MystCorp's developments - which include the project CP which MystCorp claim "is the most advanced, feature packed kid's package currently available on any platform." MystCorp are based in Belfast, Northern Ireland and may be contacted at +44 (0) 1232 808 369.

Haage & Partner new editions and additions

Haage & Partner are now shipping the latest version of Tornado3D, the ray tracing package from Italian developers Eyelight.

New features in V1.5 include a real-time colour preview function for WYSIWYG rendering and full support for the Virge 3D accelerator in the CyberVision 64/3D graphics boards for enhanced performance. Registered users will receive the upgrade free of charge. There will be a full review of this exciting product in next month's issue. More information can be found at <http://www.tornado.com>.

Haage & Partner are also improving their customer support by hiring five new members of staff in this department. These new personnel will handle phone and e-mail queries from users and administer H&P's various mailing lists.

International AMIGA 98

International Amiga 98

North America's foremost Amiga event, International Amiga 98 will be taking place on the 29th and 30th of May at the International Plaza Hotel in Toronto. Canada Admission price for both days is \$15CAD, but you can save \$5 off this price by registering beforehand with Randomize. The show's hosts. This not-to-be missed event will

have exhibitors such as Amiga International, Phase 5, Nove Design and Newtek and will feature classes held Amiga personalities such as Amiga International's Joe Torre and Jason Compton of Amiga Report and CU Amiga.

For more information visit the IAm98 website at <http://www.randomize.com/iam98.html> or phone Sylvia Bevan 905-939-9371.



Tornado3D ▲

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Eyelight	22-23	0171 253 3003
Fast Computers	21	0112 331 9444
First Computer Centre	70	0905 223 800
ISoft	08C	01543 298 377
Carl Associates	32	01234 081 500
Power Computing	6-9	01702 282 836
Selectsoft	33	01010 240 3000
World Science	10C-3	01020 822 321
White Knight Technology	54-55	01010 202 1000
Wizard Developments	88	

News in Brief

Stickers at last!

OK, we give in. After months of harassment by you guys, we've got together with Amiga International to bring you Powered By Amiga Stickers to put on those unmarked lower cases or wherever else you fancy. Check in next month's issue for your free sticker!

New look for Amiga International web site

Amiga International have updated their website to give it a more professional look. Changes include revised layouts and graphics, frames and no frames versions, a new index structure and some new sections. This site can be found at <http://www.amiga.de>

SCALOS released

SCALOS, the Workbench replacement system from Allen Design, the team responsible for the ubiquitous MCP, has been released at last.

Features include full multitasking, an icon desktop system, with NewIcons support and extensive configurability. The registered version of SCALOS, available for 300M, emulates WB with compatibility claimed at 99.9%. Details are available from <http://www.elendesign.net>

Cut-price Universe Digital

Universe v1.03, the award-winning astronomical simulator package from Syzygy, is now available on CD-ROM for half-price. Syzygy say "With our new lower price, we expect the software to become more accessible to the casual astronomy enthusiast. This new CD-ROM distribution, with no printed manual or box, ships for \$75CD which exchanges currently at about £31."

Syzygy are also offering discounts of \$10 for bulk orders of 5 copies or more. More information on Digital Universe can be found at <http://www.syz.com/DU/amiga-ged.html>



Stateside News

by Joellen Compton, Editor in Chief of Amiga Report Magazine

ICOA Fumbles Election

Industry Council Open Amiga! is the series of populist groups started to further the cause of the Amiga. The ICOA has been in one form or another for over a year, and operated under the leadership of the Temporary Steering Committee - a group of live seminars, professionals and enthusiasts. The temporary steering committee was to be elected to the permanent version of the group operating as a corporation, has made speeches and discussions around the world, and has a

However, the election of the first steering committee member has not gone smoothly. The position of 'User Representative' included a joke candidate, and the results have been mysteriously held up due to 'irregularities.' The final result was marred by claims of fraudulent votes and a three-way tie, and after hasty negotiations, a new round of elections have been announced.

Nominations for the next round are open until 30th May. Entries must include contact details for the nominee and five supporters, along with a statement from the nominee agreeing to the terms of the election and the decisions of the

arbiters, and a statement of net more than 500 words detailing the nominee's position which will be posted to the ICOA website. Postal entries may be made to

USA/Canada: Andrew Benhaus,
80 First Crescent, Cambridge
Ontario N1C 1N8, Canada

UK: Ben Hutchings
18 Llewellyn Avenue, Oxford OX3 9RL

If you have internet access you can check all the latest from ICOA at their website
www.amiganet.org/icoa/

Newtek Slashes Prices

Inside the field of non-endorsers and desktop products, Newtek slashed prices on its Teostar/Flyer bundle almost immediately after they announced it. The price of a 4000T with Teostar Flyer installed is an all-time low. (Previously, a comparable Amiga could run that or more.) At the other end of the spectrum, a Video Toaster 4000T J551000. These levels of price may make the systems more attractive for European use, even with need for an external NTSC/PAL conversion. What has caught many eyes is the fact that Newtek's price announcement explicitly mentions an Amiga 4000T. For years, Newtek has been accused, for good reason, of being or hiding the fact that their top product relies on Amiga technology. Newtek can be reached at 70-8000, www.newtek.com

World Construction: More Than 6 Days

Questar Productions' World Construction Set V2 has been promised for Amiga release for some time. WCS 2 would put the likes of VistaPro and Scenery Animator to shame. A pre-release version was put on the market two years ago, with a number of features missing, incomplete, or broken. Questar promised a full upgrade would be available promptly, and turned their attention to other platforms (Intel and Alpha). The clock has marched forward, and a new narrative has begun to get restless. A call to the Questar team cleared up a few issues.

A new version of WCS for the Amiga will be made available. The source code has apparently been mostly rewritten due to extensive changes made from the Amiga to the PC version. The eventual release of a full WCS will be essentially identical to the PC/Alpha versions and similar to the planned feature list of WCS 2. PowerPC support is planned, but may not be available immediately.

For more information, contact Questar Productions at +303-659-4028, www.questarproductions.com, online

Calendar Check



A quick look at upcoming Stateside Amiga events:

■ **International Amiga '98** (May 30-31, Toronto, Canada) It's not too late to visit beautiful Ontario and take in a couple of days of Amiga madness hosted by Randomize Distribution. In addition to the usual gang of American and Canadian firms, Phase5 and Oberland have been convinced to put in an appearance (905-939-8371 or www.randomize.com/ie98.html for more information)

■ **AmiWest '98** (July 10-13, Sacramento, California) This show looks like it might be

a smaller event than the others in the US this year, but if you need an excuse to see California, let this be it. The show promises to be heavy on seminars and classes. (916-368-7232 fax or www.sac.amiwest/for more information)

■ **Midwest Amiga Expo '98** (October 2-4, Columbus, Ohio) The MAE organizers may be trying to set a record for biggest move-updates for an expo on over a two-year period. In '96, it was held in a suburban high school commons. This year it will be at the downtown Hyatt. No exhibitor information yet, but last year was a good brew. www.amicon.org/m98.html for more info

CD-ROM

Super CD-ROM 23



Welcome to CUCD23. This CD is crammed full of programs, games, utilities, mods and a host of other goodies. If you don't yet have a CD drive, this is your reason to buy one. Prices have never been lower and 650MB of quality software each month is just too good to miss out on.

How much of what?

It's easy to miss when the real contents of a CUCD file so here's a list of how much data lies in each directory. Headlining the CD is Game creation (see page 18 for a walkthrough guide). Apart from that there's more than enough to keep anyone going until next month, whether its graphics, offline web browsing, music, programming or tinkering with the many utilities and tools to be found on the disc.

• Making Games.....	106MB
• CDSupport.....	88MB
• System files.....	12MB
• CDROM.....	11MB
• Demos.....	32MB
• Games.....	44MB
• Graphics.....	69MB
• Kids.....	27MB
• Magazine.....	39MB
• Online.....	56MB
• Programming.....	9MB
• Readers.....	21MB
• Sound.....	72MB
• Utilities.....	19MB
• WWW.....	32MB

Making the most of CUCD23



All CUCDs are designed to be used whether you boot from the CD or your normal Workbench. If you boot from the CD, everything is setup and ready to go. If you want to access the CD from your Workbench, you should first run IntCD. This sets up various assigns and paths needed by programs on the CD, so if you don't do it, things won't work. It doesn't make any changes to your system, or write any files to your hard drive, all changes are temporary and can be reversed by running IntCD again.

Your own custom CD

In the past you had to use whatever file viewers we set up on the CD, since these had to work with all Amigas they were quite limited. From CUCD12 we decided to allow you to specify how the CD should work on your Amiga and included CDprefs in the CDSupport drawer. If you have never run this before you should be asked if you want to when you run IntCD. CDprefs lets you specify which program you want to use to handle each type of file, graphics card users can view pictures in full 24 bit colour, ProjectXG users can listen to midi files through their midi card and people with sound cards can listen to mods with an AHI module player. It also means we were able to provide different defaults for Workbench 2.x users.

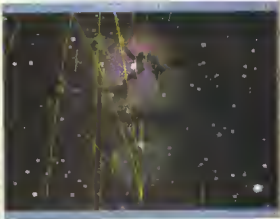
Once you have run CDprefs, your setting will be saved to your hard drive and will be used every time you use this CD or any other CUCD.

Some people had problems with the original use of IDEs, partly through a lack of understanding of how it worked and partly through a lack of explanation from us. All icons now use CUCDfile as their default tool, and the previous IDE problems should be a thing of the past. IntCD now copies CUCDfile and it's configuration to your hard drive, if it's not already there. This means that files copied from the CD will now work without needing the CD present. You will almost certainly need to run CUCDprefs to set it up to use your own viewers, but you should do that anyway as it will result in faster access. If you do have any problems, make sure you have run IntCD at least once.

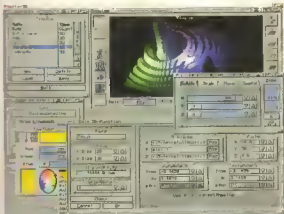
Highlights of CU Amiga Super CD 23



▲ With AmigaPC you can meet the bad guys faster than ever



▲ Watch the eye candy as PlayMF plays your MIDI songs



▲ Plotter3D creates stunning images from a few numbers

Games/ADoomPPC

thought by many to be the best Doom clone, has now moved to the PowerPC. Until Quake is released for the PowerPC, this is probably your best chance of getting the power of a PPC Amiga gaming.

Demos/SPO98

etrium 98 was a demo party for Amigas only. Here are the top highlights in each category.

Graphics/Icons

Icons giva Workbench the ability to display a wider range of colours, in the colours the user intended. The AES icons of versions of NewIcons have not been updated for a while, but

here is a new set, using the extra colours that NewIcons4 offers.

Online/WebFX

WebFX is an add-on for ImageFX. It is designed to create images and animations suitable for use on WWW pages. It uses a straightforward drag and drop interface to create affects for images and animations such as drop shadows on pictures, or fading one to another as a gif anim.

Graphics/Plotter3D

Plotter3D creates graphics from mathematical functions. Imagine objects, pictures and fonts. It has interactive previews, so you can experiment with the settings and see the results immediately, rather

than having to render again after each change.

Sound/PlayMF

PlayMF itself is a multimedia player that works well with an XG media card as used in Project XG. It also comes with a couple of 'utilities' to provide background eye candy while playing the songs.

Utilities/URB

Ever wished your favourite program had just a couple of extra buttons for the things you do so often? URB lets you add button banks to any public screen and run Workbench programs, AmigaDOS commands or ARexx scripts from each button.

Online/WebTutor

This is a comprehensive tutorial on producing web pages. It's best viewed with AWeb since it makes quite extensive use of JavaScript although it is viewable in other browsers too.

Kids

It's hard to pick out particular programs here. There is a wide range of children's software, appropriate to all ages. Have a look and make your own mind up.



▲ Add command buttons to any screen with URB

Making things work

Wherever possible, we have tried to make software work straight from the CD, this isn't always possible for a number of reasons. Some programs need to be installed to your hard drive to work, often requiring specific system files. These files are usually on the CD so running InitCD often helps here.

Most software contains a list of system requirements in the documentation, and some will not run unless you have the required processor, memory, operating system version or chipset.

Some programs, particularly demos and games are written in an OS illegal way. This can mean they only work on specific machine specifications, sometimes the readme states this, but not always. Many demos are intended to be run from a shell, the icons we add simply start them from a script. In some cases this will not work, especially demos that need a lot of Chip RAM. In this case you will need to boot without startup-sequence and run the program from the shell. Your Workbench manual should explain how to do this.

What's on this month's CU Amiga CD?



▲ Learn to create or improve your web site with WebTutor

Creating Games:

Reality Game Engine, as supplied on the floppy disks is in here, along with a wealth of other material for creating your own games. There are several other games creators, such as Shoot 'Em Up Construction Kit, Backbone Graal and updates on the main interactive fiction programs from last month's CD.

There is also a selection of tools and information for use with the established programming languages, and the complete source code to Alan Breed 3D so you can see how a commercial game is programmed.

CDSupport

This contains various support files, such as mod players, amn players, GMPay, MUI, ClassAct. Most importantly, this is where the CDPrefs program lives. With this you can customise your CUCD to launch your choice of program for each type of file. Two other notable icons in here are Docs guide with links to all the program documentation files on the CD and Index. Run Index type in the name of a program, or part of it, and it will search the contents of the CD for you. You can either search the current CD or the index files of all CUCDs since

number 4. CDSupport also contains icons to start ProNET in various configurations ready to use when linking a CDTV or CD32 to another Amiga.

CUCD:

The CUCD drawer contains most of the CD contents, here is a selection of what each drawer holds.

CDROM



The CDROM section has an updated collection of CDIDs for music CDs, with the addition of a number

of heavy metal CDs to the collection. Information on the latest Amnet CDs has also been added.

Demos:



We have all the successful demos from the recent Spoletium 98 party, an Amiga-only event.

Games:



Another collection of games and data files, including a PowerPC version of ADoom and, along with a

high quality replacement set of MIDI instruments for this, the 68K version ADescant_VIRGE is

the first game to utilise the 3D capabilities of the Cybervision graphics card.

Graphics



Viewers to handle all kinds of graphic files including a PDF viewer and ademo of ArtStudioPro, as reviewed in last month's CU Amiga. There is also more collections of icons and backdrops to customise your Workbench.

Kids:

A comprehensive selection of the educational software available for the Amiga today. Paint packages, games, music and a lot more for young Amiga users.

Magazine:



Here are all the support files for the CU Tutorial. The software reviewed in the InternetPD pages is all on here, and some programs to use AIRLink. We have mp3 audio files of Petro Tyschtschenko's recent address in Finland, including a Q&A session.

Online:



Plenty of Internet software this month, including the latest Voyage, a new web server and WebFX for creating outstanding web page graphics. There is also a tutorial on creating web pages and the regular selection of postings to fidonet, usenet and the CU Amiga mailing list.

Programming



As well as the programming tools in the main feature directory, we have several new and updated debugging tools here, some more MUI classes and the latest postings from the Amos, Blitz and E mailing lists.

Readers



All your own work, another 20Mb+ of it. If you have created something you think is worth sharing with the rest of CU Amiga's readers, send it to us for inclusion here.

Sound:



A real test for mod fans with around seven new modules on this month's CD. And if you are more interested in creating mods than listening to them, we also have a collection of quality 16 bit samples. MIDI fans aren't forgotten with MidTracker and a midi player that also works with ProjectXG.

Utilities:



A diverse collection of enhancements for your Amiga. If you want to add button bars to any screen, find files on your hard drive or improve your DOPus Workbench even further, there's something here for you.

WWW:



Another selection of Amiga related web sites. Naturally this includes the celebrated CU Amiga Online. If you have a web site you think should be on a CUCD, send us an email.



Disk doesn't load?

If your CD does not load contact DiskXpress on 01451 810788. If they advise that the CD is faulty send it along with a SAE to: CU Amiga Magazine Disk Returns, DiskXpress, 7 Willow Court, Bourton Industrial Park, Bourton on the water, Gloucestershire GL54 2HQ.

Please note that some CDs will not autoboot on systems other than CD32s, so try loading it from Workbench first. CUCDs will work with almost all Amiga configurations and filesystems. However, we recommend older CD filesystems be replaced where possible. A non-working program is not an indication of a faulty CD!

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DISKS

Reality
Game Engine

Welcome to Reality - the Ultimate Software Construction Kit. Reality is a modular game creation system. With Reality, you can take stock or custom graphics, backgrounds, sounds and music and build a game around a framework (called a "skeleton" in Reality) to create your own masterpiece.

Loading Instructions

To install the Reality Game Creator on your hard drive from this month's cover disk, first boot up Workbench and then insert cover disk 102. Open the disk and you will see an icon called "Drag_Me_To_HD_and_Click". If you do just this - drag it to the place on your hard drive where you wish it to go and double click it - Reality will be installed there. During the installation process you will be prompted to insert the other disk, cover disk number 104. The Reality system will create its own drawer.

Installation from the CD-ROM, is even easier. Just drag the RealityGameEngine to the location on your hard drive of your choice. While the system will run from the CD-ROM, you will be unable to save any changes there. To run Reality, open up the drawer named "RealityGameEngine" and double click on the icon called "StartREALITY". Detailed instructions on using the system are contained these pages.

Getting Started

Reality is designed to be very usable on a stock A1200 system - a hard drive is not necessary although is highly recommended for speed and storage purposes. Some Reality support modules may experience trouble with 060 Amiges, although the main Reality editors are generally friendly to various system configurations. Reality's modules do not multitask with each other and most do not multitask with the rest of your system, either. You can exit Reality from the main menu (by clicking the title bar) or from certain Reality modules.

This will drop you back to Workbench and restore any other parts of your system which may have been running before you launched Reality. It's always safe to quit from the main menu since you save all of your work-in-progress in the respective modules.

The best add-on for Reality will be a good paint program, such as

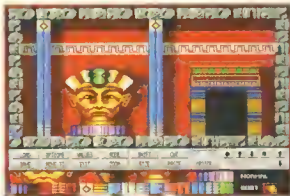
Personal Paint or Deluxe Paint. Reality comes with a rudimentary painter which should only be used by the extremely desperate. On one of our machines it crashed on exit - beware! To get your feet wet, we've included one Reality skeleton disk, Charlie Chimp. The authors have literally dozens of these to choose from if you find you want help branching out beyond the platform puzzler skeleton.

The skeleton disks are your key to making all your hard work in Reality pay off on the small screen.

Understanding Reality

Virtually all of the input (aside from text messages) you provide to Reality is with the mouse. Reality's GUI should be fairly comfortable for anyone with good Amiga experience, but some conventions may take some getting used to.

As mentioned before, Reality does not multitask, so screen-flopping and window-dragging are not



A The Reality Background Editor

enabled. Number input is perhaps the most unusual aspect of Reality's interface. Most programs handle numeric values with either a text gadget (type the number) or a slider (drag a bar to a certain value).

Reality uses buttons. Left-click on a button to increase the value (usually shown in a bar elsewhere on the screen); right-click to decrease

when saving. Reality tries GRA versus sprites, sprites GRA, for example.

Animation Studio. Deliciously self-explanatory. The companion piece to the Graphics Toolkit. Here, you load in sprite GRA data as created in the Toolkit and see how it will look once you animate—a walking Charlie Chimp, in the example you'll find with this issue. The "hot spot" function allows you to create animations using frames which are not of uniform height, and a walking chimp qualifies, since he tends to bounce as he travels. By pulling up the Animation sub-menu, you can build an animation which runs on the screen while you work. Using "add image", you tell the system the sequence of frames you want to see flipped through. With the Chimp example, use Add Image to build the 6 frame animation of our hero

playing until you hit the button again, or play a sound sample. Using the left/right mouse button trick on the Sample Number button picks which clip you want to hear, and the "Sam speed" 1" and "100" alter the frequency by those units. The save functions are really provided so you can place copies of these files on other locations on your hard drive without having to leave Reality proper.

Picture Converter: This section of Reality lets you incorporate regular IFF files into your Reality games for use as title cards, intros, trailers, that sort of thing. It really serves as a very basic image manipulator; you can save the image in a custom compressed PIC format after the colour depth, and change the width and height in this module. Beware! This is not for scaling or any sort of intelligent colour interpolation. All you're doing is slicing the palette and reducing the visible area of the picture, respectively. If you need more complex work done, you'll need to look to a

▼ Charlie Chimp in Action

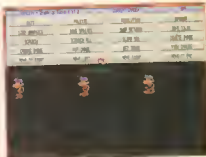


program like ImageStudio or ImageFX. All this module will do is let

you match depth to Reality's demands and let youinker with the visible size of an image to give it the proper appearance.

Introduction Creator: You have to welcome your players to your game, and this is how you do it. This saves all intro data onto your skeleton disk. The mark element is an IFF picture, which you load in with the Load Picture command.

Tack on a Reality music file, and, if you wish, add a text message with Edit Text. A law words about the interesting mouse/keyboard combination of the scroll editor, it's actually faster to use the mouse than the arrow keys to scroll through the text, but I strongly encourage you type your message. The "newline" or "n" breaks are used for some of the text display methods to indicate when they should drop down to a new line. The "text display" gives the Y-coordinate the text should start appearing on (some displays take up more space



▲ The Graphics Toolkit

than others you may need to experiment with your image before you can settle on a display).

Slideshow Creator. Used to create an on-game slideshow—good for advancing the plot, rewarding the player for a job well done with some eye candy, that sort of thing. If you're lar enough along with Reality that you're dealing with the Slideshow Creator it will be no problem for you but a brief summary never hurts. You can prepare your slideshow with a tune at any time with the Load Music button. To set up the rest of the show, load each individual frame with the Load Picture button. IFF or PIC files. The screen will track how many slides are in your show in the "Picture No." indicator. Each picture can have its own Appear and Disappear effect, along with a delay time—the higher the number, the longer it's on the screen, with the exception of "0" which requires that the player hit the mouse or joystick

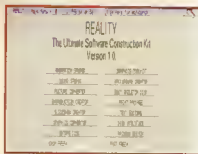
The Appear, Disappear, and Text Effect/Method buttons customize the intro with a series of special effects.

Appear Effects:

- 0: Fade Up 1: Up/Down Staggered slides 2: Full/Right Staggered slides 3: Full Up/Down slide 4: Left slide 5: Right slide 6: Left/right

Disappear Effects:

- 0: Fade Down 1: Center 2: Slide 3: Slide 4: Slide 5: Slide 6: Slide 7: Slide 8: Slide 9: Slide 10: Slide 11: Slide 12: Slide 13: Slide 14: Slide 15: Slide 16: Slide 17: Slide 18: Slide 19: Slide 20: Slide 21: Slide 22: Slide 23: Slide 24: Slide 25: Slide 26: Slide 27: Slide 28: Slide 29: Slide 30: Slide 31: Slide 32: Slide 33: Slide 34: Slide 35: Slide 36: Slide 37: Slide 38: Slide 39: Slide 40: Slide 41: Slide 42: Slide 43: Slide 44: Slide 45: Slide 46: Slide 47: Slide 48: Slide 49: Slide 50: Slide 51: Slide 52: Slide 53: Slide 54: Slide 55: Slide 56: Slide 57: Slide 58: Slide 59: Slide 60: Slide 61: Slide 62: Slide 63: Slide 64: Slide 65: Slide 66: Slide 67: Slide 68: Slide 69: Slide 70: Slide 71: Slide 72: Slide 73: Slide 74: Slide 75: Slide 76: Slide 77: Slide 78: Slide 79: Slide 80: Slide 81: Slide 82: Slide 83: Slide 84: Slide 85: Slide 86: Slide 87: Slide 88: Slide 89: Slide 90: Slide 91: Slide 92: Slide 93: Slide 94: Slide 95: Slide 96: Slide 97: Slide 98: Slide 99: Slide 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1341: Slide 1342: Slide 1343: Slide 1344: Slide 1345: Slide 1346: Slide 1347: Slide 1348: Slide 1349: Slide 1350: Slide 1351: Slide 1352: Slide 1353: Slide 1354: Slide 1355: Slide 1356: Slide 1357: Slide 1358: Slide 1359: Slide 1360: Slide 1361: Slide 1362: Slide 1363: Slide 1364: Slide 1365: Slide 1366: Slide 1367: Slide 1368: Slide 1369: Slide 1370: Slide 1371: Slide 1372: Slide 1373: Slide 1374: Slide 1375: Slide 1376: Slide 1377: Slide 1378: Slide 1379: Slide 1380: Slide 1381: Slide 1382: Slide 1383: Slide 1384: Slide 1385: Slide 1386: Slide 1387: Slide 1388: Slide 1389: Slide 1390: Slide 1391: Slide 1392: Slide 1393: Slide 1394: Slide 1395: Slide 1396: Slide 1397: Slide 1398: Slide 1399: Slide 1400: Slide 1401: Slide 1402: Slide 1403: Slide 1404: Slide 1405: Slide 1406: Slide 1407: Slide 1408: Slide 1409: Slide 1410: Slide 1411: Slide 1412: Slide 1413: Slide 1414: Slide 1415: Slide 1416: Slide 1417: Slide 1418: Slide 1419: Slide 1420: Slide 1421: Slide 1422: Slide 1423: Slide 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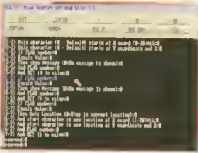


▲ The Reality main menu

button before the show will go on.

The Loop trigger determines whether the game will continue after the slideshow or simply start again (good for previewing and promoting your games). When you're done, "Save Defaults" will record the slideshow script for later use in the game building process.

Graphics Converter: Basically, a module to allow you to export pictures from the Reality .GRA format to an IFF file for treatment in an external



▲ The Adventure Game Setup Editor

program. The only real trick here is that you should avoid using colour 1 for anything in the paint program as Reality reserves that colour for its own devices.

Background Creator (Map Editor). Once you get serious about game creation, you'll spend a lot of time in

which you can scroll across or use in frame-by-frame fashion (like a level) as your playground. The best way to learn this editor is by loading in an included set of tiles and the corresponding map. You can scroll across using the arrows on the upper right side of the control box.

To see clearly how the tiles work turn on the grid under the Options submenu. The Map editor works very much like a paint program, except you paint with a large tile brush in a grid. You can scroll through your "palette" of tiles using the arrows near the double row of tiles. The right mouse button acts as a single level undo when drawing. Practice will make perfect and you'll be a master in no time. The one other major detail to note is the "Values" menu. This allows you to give an attribute to a particular type of

tile, to mark it as a background, a platform, a door, a deadly surface etc. The game creation phase actually defines what a value of 50 means as opposed to a value of 10, but it is in the map editor where you give the tiles their designation.

Making your own Reality Edit Skeleton Disk:

Here is where all of the pieces of Reality come together. By using a Skeleton Disk, you can build your own game. The Charlie Chimp game is one of the skeletons provided and may be used as the basis for your own arcade adventure

game, but the people at BPM make a number of different launched games if you want to play in another genre. Each Skeleton has different characteristics, so if you start branching out you'll have to learn some new techniques.

When you select Edit Skeleton Disk from the main Reality Menu it then asks you if you wish to access the Skeleton Disk from the hard drive. Click Yes here. It then prompts you to select a Skeleton Disk. Choose number two for the arcade adventure skeleton and click OK.

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The Adventure Skeleton

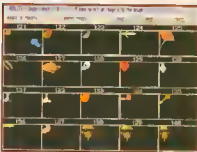
You are presented with the following option:

Load Reality: Returns to the Reality main menu.

Test: For play-testing your game. This is a good way to play through Charlie Chimp to get a feel for what the game looks like before you start designing it, as well as a way to get reasonably quick verification that your changes work (or don't). Note that you don't see any intro you may have created, only the game itself.

Edit Stats: Here you set the global characteristics for the game, such as the number of lives for the player, the players animation sequences, and the positions of text messages on the screen. The interface is quite odd and there's no cancel button, so be very careful before you start messing with it. Here's how

to make changes: Look at, but don't click on, the list on the screen. There are various game attributes followed by their numerical settings. Use the number increment buttons with your left and right mouse buttons to set the number that you want to change one of those attributes to. This is a little uncom-



▲ Choose an object for your adventure

fortable but if you're careful you will get the hang of the system.

Messages: You'll want to communicate with your players, and this is where that takes place. Messages are identified by number and the Message Editor lets you choose which message you want to Edit or View. The Edit Message function is very straightforward with the same on-screen keyboard used in the main Reality program. View mes-

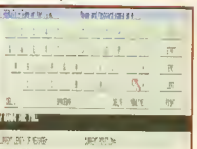


▲ Charlie Chimp picking up an object

sage allows you to display the message as it will be seen in the final game. Exit takes you back to the main Adventure menu.

Objects: Hammers, daggers, potions, powerups. They're all objects and they need your help before they can be real. The Object

▼ The Adventure Message Editor





► The Charlie Chimp wire scene

here you create them - what the player has, his score, his life, and where it may be found. Take a look through the Charlie Chimp and note what reward and

Editor allows you to define 100 objects. You can define the object you wish in the usual fashion on the screen below the object may be applied to the object's attributes shown by a number may be altered by clicking on the 1 or 100 gradual way. Assign each object an attribute number and a graphics image alternatively by selecting the object. This allows you to previously defined select and object's

Name gadget is for giving an object a textual works similarly to the one above. An object in the game, either a room, a location, a location attribute or by the View-Set gadget. This allows you to position an object in the room.

Room Names fairly minimal. Create room names in the game. Scroll through numbers with the arrow keys and you're

Define Zones defines places where events happen in the game. They are used by the player

and, in conjunction with Game Setup options, allow the creation of the puzzles. For example, to create a locked door in your game, you could define a zone the size of the door and by use of the Game SetUp options, not permit the player to enter that zone unless the key is dropped in an adjacent zone.

Before you actually create a zone, you must select the room in which the zone is to be located and the zone number you wish to define. There may be four zones for each room. You define a zone by left-clicking on the upper left hand corner of the area you want to define and right-clicking on the lower right hand corner. (Beware! A zone must be at least one pixel thick - don't left-click on the very bottom of the screen or you'll be sorry.)

BOB Setup: BOBs are special objects or characters in your game. A typical use for BOBs is for creating enemies which attack your player, but other uses include animated and static backdrops. BOBs are not restricted to location gads like normal objects are and may have simple movement sequences or animation.

The BOB editor works much like the objects editor. You make pick a BOB number, apply a number to a particular BOB attribute and select the BOB's graphic image in a similar way. The View Type gadget may be selected after choosing a number and lets you view an example of each type of BOB.

For example, type 0 is a static animated BOB, while a type 1 BOB moves horizontally and is animated. The Test BOB gadget allows you to pick a room in your game and view the graphics and animations of all the BOBs, etc.

Game Setup: This is where it all comes together for your game. It allows you to design and specify how all puzzles, objects, zones and other features interact with your player. When you click on the Game Setup gadget you are presented with a list of attributes for a particular location.

This list may be scrolled up and down using the move up and move down buttons. These attributes effect a set of conditions and tests for that location. The first 55 attributes are used when the player first enters a location - for example, the first two specify the start location for the player in that location. The Next 10 allow you to specify which Zones the player can enter and which he cannot. The next 105 are used for when the fire button is pressed while the player is standing in Zone 1, the following 105 for when the button is pressed in Zone 2, etc.

One concept that you will need to get to grips with is Flags. Flags are used similar to the way variables are used in usual programming languages. There are 256 flags, each of which may have a value between 0 and 255. Before any process is carried out in the game that requires certain conditions to be met, the computer

will check the value of certain Flags to see if they are set to a particular value. For example, the sequence

IF FLAG number=5 Equals Value=0 Then Show Message=19 And FLAG number=5 And Set it to value=60

will check to see if FLAG number 5 is equal to 0 and, if it is, message number 19 will be displayed. Then it will set the FLAG number 5 to the value 60. (There are a few special Flags. Flag 0 is reserved and Flag 1, when set to 255, tells the system that the game has been completed.) The best way to learn how this system works is to experiment with the game supplied. Try changing certain flags, etc. to see what results you get.

Conclusion

Reality is willing to do much of the grunt work in game creation. You don't need to be a skilled programmer, and the included music, sound effects, and graphics mean you don't have to be an artist either. All you need is a little creativity and hard work, and you and Reality will be turning out the kind of games you want to play!

Richard Drummond/Jason Compton

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GAME COZ

EVER WANTED TO MAKE YOUR OWN VIDEO GAMES? NOW'S AS GOOD A TIME AS ANY TO MAKE A START, WITH SOFTWARE ON THE COVERDISKS AND OUR VIRTUALLY COMPLETE GUIDE...

There's a lot to be said for the idea of making your own computer games. It's one of the most all-round challenging, creative and anxiety-free things you can do with a computer, and in the Amiga you have an ideal development system. For some people, creating games is far more enjoyable than playing them. For others it's a double-headed coin. Not only do you get to work on the concept, design, graphics and soundtrack, you get your own personally crafted game to play at the end of it. This month's cover disks contain the Reality game creator and there's even more on the CD, including Shoot 'em Up Construction Kit and some more advanced development tools. That's not enough to give anyone an initial leg up into the world of video game creation. Over the next few pages we'll be discussing the various aspects of game design, with help and advice from the professionals, to form a solid base from which you can launch your ambitions.

WHERE TO START?

If you've never designed or written a game, you don't expect to be able to take over the world with your first attempt. Don't kid yourself that the game-playing public are going to be thrilled with your earliest efforts if they're based on concepts that have been kicking around monitor screens for the past couple of decades. Even so, sometimes the best place to start is just there, at the start. If you can knock up a half-decent Space Invaders or Pac Man, even if it's not for public consumption, at least you'll have given yourself a basic grounding in the fundamentals (how to move sprites, collision detection, point scoring, character animation etc).

We'll cover the sticky subject of programming a little later on, but even if in the long run you don't intend to get your hands dirty with the programming side of things, it's hardly fair to have a toker with a high-level language (such as Blitz Basic) or, at least a game creator in order to take your head around the kind of logic involved in the process.

CREATION

THE GAMES

we are saving our sighs for a minute or so. In the meantime, let's see what we're letting ourselves in for. First of all, we must have an idea. That idea could be to rip off a game from another platform, but that's going to bypass most of the fun of pure design and creation, so we'll assume this is for a new game concept. Goodness... obviously better than bad press, but how do you come up with them, and then what to do with them? Over- or remarkable?

—Jon Harrer

The process of coming up with game ideas is really pretty straightforward. You just need to keep hold of the good ideas that fit through your mind and then build on them. Many people have good ideas but are either bad at:

- recognising a good idea from a bad one, normally because they are more / less involved in the idea
- are therefore either too protective or too naive of it because it is theirs, rather than concentrating on the main issue which is it a good idea or a crap idea. Objectivity is the key to producing a good product.
- is no room for personal ego problems or design. Or.

- likewise, being comfortable with manipulating it, reinventing bits of it, etc. don't work.

key is that with experience you learn to quickly dismiss bad ideas and good ones. However, you can only get the thoughts in your own head out in larger and larger terms, instead of a new problem of idea optimization—the fact that your visualization of a crazy idea seems different to others.

Generally the rule for good design is to do everything, but to be very selective about what you actually do for and to always show the inner picture of the whole company.

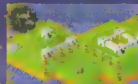
EVOLUTIONARY NODES

You could spend your days building the 1,000th Bambernane clone, or you could hijack the course of video-gaming history. It's your choice. To help you set the inspiration freest here are ten games that blazed the evolutionary path off at a tangent for one reason or another. Some treated the start of completely new genres, while others took an existing concept and put a radical new spin on it. We've deliberately left out the late 70s and early 80s coin-ops that spawned the whole idea of video games (eg. Space Invaders, Saramis, Pac Man etc) so don't write in! No doubt you'll have your own favourites to add to the list as well.

Defender of the Crown

DEFENDER OF THE CROWN

Cinemaware exploited the Amiga's revolutionary graphics potential, bringing us the first ever "interactive movie".



POPULOUS

Another game-defining moment came with Bullock's invention of the God simulator.*



WOLFENSTEIN 3D

The forerunner to *Doom* and *Quake* started the 90s 3D gaming revolution.

LEADERBOARD

Solid 3D graphics, a control method refined by every subsequent roll game, and motion capture tool.

FOOTBALL MANAGER

The name says it all. The party-scooped Kevin Farn should be a millionaire now (but probably isn't).

KICK OFF

Previously balls were stuck firmly to feet and pitches viewed solely from the side (apart from Teomo's World Cup semi-final).



TETRIS

From Russia with squares, Tetris proved dull-looking puzzle games could conquer the world.



VIRTUA FIGHTER

The first example of the inevitable 3D adaptation of the Street Fighter theme.

**ACCREDITED**

Luxorlike Games defined the format for graphic adventures for the next ten years.

GREENERY

From the mind of Paul Wooker, this was the original virtual reality adventure.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

SO YOU'VE GOT AN IDEA FOR A GAME AND YOU THINK IT'S A WINNER. WHERE DO YOU GO FROM HERE?

First, you have the techniques by the game's design team. It's time to get about building. If you are in a team, it's a good idea to have a meeting to discuss the game's design.

It's time to show how the game should be played. You could discuss about the game's design. It's a good idea to have a meeting to discuss the game's design.

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GENERAL ADVICE

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Titan Starport



Project Manager and everyone will know who's taking charge. As the Project Manager, it's your responsibility to communicate the original concept to the team so that everyone understands it completely. It's also having a team of people willing to disagree.

It's not a team at all, group of people working together. If you are on one game alone, it's a team. If you are on one game alone, it's a team.

It's not a team at all, group of people working together. If you are on one game alone, it's a team. If you are on one game alone, it's a team.

FIRST STEPS

Before you dive headlong into the project, do some research. And if you're not sure, ask about it. You should have a lot of fun with it. You should have a lot of fun with it. You should have a lot of fun with it.

It's not a team at all, group of people working together. If you are on one game alone, it's a team. If you are on one game alone, it's a team.

DON'T BE AFRAID



Don't be afraid of deleting things that are unfinished. It's a good idea to have a meeting to discuss the game's design. It's a good idea to have a meeting to discuss the game's design.





...that they are fun to design. That doesn't mean that they're fun to play. They're small and manageable, they're always good for setting challenge, they're fun to play, but a player coming into the game told has confidence in another is to get to the finish point and see at a glance that it was fun along the way. Mines will hold that back. Where a piece will work is if it's not enough to, for example, cause a player to be disoriented when getting around by mazes.

"The difference is taking a few seconds to get your bearings and spending ten minutes working out just where the hell you are. It might be argued that a game level is effectively a big maze, but the difference is that a maze has a ladder to distinguish one part of it from another. This means that the player spends ten minutes looking at the maze stuff. We want to be as close as possible to the next stuff we've designed together in the game, but the player won't be seeing it for some time yet. And if he gives up, he'll never see it."

Quite right, and it's also worth considering the opposite of this situation.

"There will be many moments in the game where it's tempting to show the player all the neat stuff as soon as possible, but that leaves nothing for later levels. Spread out the different things out evenly; it's better to have one cool thing in a level and a different cool thing in another, than to have both in one level and nothing interesting in the next."

"I've been at a lot of games in the company, seeing what the player sees as he progresses. Different textures are the obvious way to alter the environment. But it should also include varying the geometry of the level, different outdoor shapes, cylindrical shaped rooms and so on. Think of a journey across a country, it feels good as you see the landscape slowly change, as the landscape gives way to whatever things give way to plains and eventually the open sea. It's a achievement and a reward. The player looks at where he's been and says, 'How did I get here?'"

THE LOGICAL CAPTAIN

When you want to make a game in which the player has no obvious reason, you should make sure that a game that fits

nature, exploration or puzzle elements is

When the player triggers off something, by hitting a switch, the result should be so obvious that the player spends ages trying to find it. Pressing a switch here which opens a doorway on the opposite side of the level is get involved at all. In Duke Nukem there was a rather odd way around this... When a switch really did open a door, it was away, you could see it opening, as a nearby monitor. This leads us to the point: there should always be a connection between what the player does and the results of the action. This player should be able to turn around and see the result, or hear something taking place just behind the side. At the very least there should be some kind of cut as to what he has just done. Some indication that the state of something has changed.

Think a little more largely than Press Buttons, Open Doors. Say for example we have a nuclear reactor. Shooting a pipe which explodes may not have any obvious connection with being able to enter into the reactor itself, right? But if the player shoots the

pipe, it explodes and he hears the message 'Warning, coolant system has failed'.

Reactor core has been

overheated then he's

supposed to

do something with

the core, it has

changed

the state of something.

More subtly in that case

example, if the back-

ground team immediately

started to rise it's

obvious that something

is completely screwed

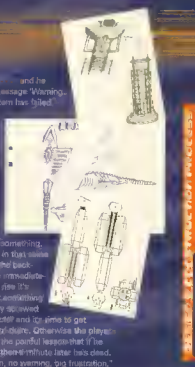
with the reactor and it's time to

get the hell out of there. Otherwise the player

has to learn the painful lesson that if he

shoots this, then a minute later he's dead.

No indication, no warning, big frustration."



DESIGNING THE GAME

There's a right or wrong way to go

about taking your game ideas through the design process, but it pays to take a leaf out of the book of some of the more experienced people in the business. We asked Bitmap Brothers' Simon Knight about the main stages involved in turning an original idea into a full-blown game...

1. We first prototype the game idea by creating a one level playable demo, either using existing graphics or by creating the minimum required making it multi-player (see player in the case of the Amiga).

2. Having established that it was as good an idea that we thought it was, a programmer creates a level editor building on the rudimentary systems created above.

3. The designer completes the design based on what was learnt from the demo.

4. According to the design, the artists do all the graphics, the musicians do all the SFX and music, and the programmers create all the routines. The artificial intelligence is largely based on what we discovered by playing the game in the demo attempting to make the computer emulate a human player.

5. The level designers design and implement the levels of the game in a basic graphical form to allow easy changes.

The processes involved in stages four and five are done in an order dictated by the game's designer so that real levels can be built as soon as possible. Thus you start learning about all the flaws in your design as soon as possible and can amend things accordingly.

Typically we create the first level (not necessarily the first level in the game) way, way before any of these stages are anywhere near complete, so all stages are evolving (and hopefully improving) as the game is being worked on.

The existing levels are played over and over again, and early levels are revised to include new ideas. Any that are deemed to be 'finished' are gone over by an artist to make them suitable for release (we call this 'window dressing').

An alpha version of the game is tested internally and externally whilst we play and play the game looking for ways to 'break' and improve it, mostly for difficulty.

A beta version is tested and tested for bugs. It's released and we go down the path!

THE LOOK & SOUND

THE WAY YOUR GAME LOOKS AND SOUNDS IS A VITAL PART OF THE MIX. BUT WHAT SHOULD IT LOOK LIKE, AND HOW SHOULD IT SOUND?

It's important that your game has a defined atmosphere, alongside the sound-

atmosphere. Am

is moody or scary. It

is cute,

as soon as

really need to think of coming up with a

script will generally suggest or even

chicken wit

"It pays to have a strong, the campover

ing arena for inspiration. Movies, both

temporary and older, can be

Then there's the work of specific artists,

again both contemporary and classic," from

Anthony Sormley to

ing a jump back to the

whirlpool. OK, so it's a move of a

dling pool as far as the Amiga is

at the time, but you should be able to do

revelations that have recently

aspen. For example, it seems to be a man

story that every programmer needs to

higher-3D rendered level sequence. Note,

these are nice and serve a purpose, but

wouldn't it make a refreshing change to see

a different style of intro sequence?

AmigaSpace builds the third with its 'hand

drawn' intro. Not only does it look different

and all the more interesting look, but it fits

well with the phone-in style.

Wouldn't it be nice to see a game intro in

the style of the magazine cover artwork? The

idea is possible for the cover magazine

the backgrounds used in the example is Ben

Hughes. His is a style, for example, which

could be looked not only to an intro



whether flat 2D or real 3D. That's just one example. Challenging yourself to do something like your mark. Bangs out a game that looks (and plays) like there's a thousand miles between you and the other. For an example of a game that seems to have combined a stunning visual style with its soundtrack, look no further than Captain Blood. AmigaSpace is mostly to

space accordingly, however, back to making a sustained subconscious level once the effect of the pill had worn off. Likewise, sometimes it's a good idea to link specific pieces of music to certain situations.

But what if the technician in your game is a bit rebellious, or CD, then you have the option of using CD audio tracks. This gives you the freedom to compose and record your music with whatever equipment you can lay your hands on. That could include full-time or temporary recording of studio pedigree. The more conventional audio while Amiga games have been the music. With a tracker which can then be played by a routine within the game code.

enter of playing in audio

Ami for full 16-bit using through a

card, although this method can

heavy demands on the CPU. While

strictly Amiga relevant, it's

steps had this to say:

"I've still not been currently using a

referred and played on the PC in our own

proprietary formats. However, the original of

the Mad in space (PC2 and Amiga). We

don't need audio and cannot be

referred sufficiently, though the Amiga

in 2000-15, but not

SOUNDTRACKING

Don't forget that the soundtrack sorted out

a game may own the long on the cake.

Who would forget the magical sounds creat-

ed by Rob Hubbard in his Commodore heyday? One

highlight was the music for Delta - the shon-

ing synth square's evoked, pastel and

dipped as the player progressed through the

"lick scrolling jew-

els. As with the

visuals, it's worth

studying the

movies for tips on

how to use sound

effects and music

to create the

required mood. For

example, if your

game included a

feature where the

player gained super-

human strength for

a short time, it's

picking up a power

up, the music

would be king



The trademark
Bannister Software
look evolved. "By
accident, although
the 'B' is still there,
it doesn't tend to
carry its own a
whole".

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

**YOU'VE GOT THE IDEAS, GRAPHICS AND SOUNDTRACK...
SOONER OR LATER YOU'LL HAVE TO PUT IT ALL TOGETHER.**

Whether you're creating your game, these are a number of ways you can. You'll find development tools in the power disks, and there's also along with a whole host of development tools, including a Kit Manager, and even advanced projects. The Kit Manager is a tool that lets you create a game kit, which is a collection of files that you can use to create a game.

The Kit Manager is a tool that lets you create a game kit, which is a collection of files that you can use to create a game. It's a tool that lets you create a game kit, which is a collection of files that you can use to create a game.

RESULTS

- one of the quickest and easiest
- creating editors, in effect you
- create a game kit, which is a
- collection of files that you can
- use to create a game.

DECK

- It's a tool that lets you create a game kit, which is a collection of files that you can use to create a game.

- It's a tool that lets you create a game kit, which is a collection of files that you can use to create a game.

BACKBONE

- It's a tool that lets you create a game kit, which is a collection of files that you can use to create a game.

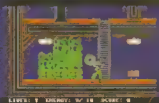
PADES

- It's a tool that lets you create a game kit, which is a collection of files that you can use to create a game.

It's a tool that lets you create a game kit, which is a collection of files that you can use to create a game. It's a tool that lets you create a game kit, which is a collection of files that you can use to create a game.

OUT2 BASIC

Now we're starting to get somewhere. Basic is very similar in theory to AMOS, but its compiler is a whole lot better. As with AMOS, it's a kind of extended BASIC with specialist commands for handling graphics and sound. The best example of a Basic game is *Blindfold*, proving that commercial-quality games are possible.



INFORMA E TADS

You could choose to write adventure games, instead. Last month we covered the recent developments in the area of multi-platform, interactive fiction. For convenience we've repeated the Inform and TADS and a number of game author systems on this month's CD. These allow you to write your own interactive fiction adventures, from scratch, and within an existing framework, which takes care of movement, sound, and most importantly, handles all the parsing of the player's text input.

This is where it gets serious. It's the ideal language if you're a visual thinker in your game. In fact, creating 3D module mapping and 3D is the exact same as creating 2D. It's a very portable language, so you can design written in C for the Amiga, PowerPC, with a few adjustments.

ments and a reasonable C compiler compiled for a 68000 Amiga. It's a good choice for strategy and adventure games, looking to the future. It's the way to go for anyone serious about programming games. The Sledge C compiler and the all-important *Amiga C++* were given away free with the August 1997 issue of *Amiga*.

AMIGA C

It's a debate whether it's worth investing time learning the fairly fast and versatile C language, not because it's too good, but because of the steep cost of learning it. It's a programming language that's not too hard to learn, so you'll probably not want to go through the process again a year or two later, which is completely true. The C language won't be the top of your list. Amiga C was given away free with a guide book, *Amiga C++*, in the December 1996 issue of *Amiga*.

ASSEMBLY

This is the closest you can get to talking to the computer. Probably the only way you would want to program assembly code. When *Clicks & Code* was first published, it was the only PC book that had a C source code and assembly code. It's a book that's been updated to the Amiga version, so you can make the same updates to the PC version as well.

GO HEAD HURTS!

If you're not an expert programmer, don't let these tools scare you. The programmer does the programming while you get on with the graphics and sound. And don't forget that you'll find some additional tools and packages in this month's CD.



FREE 132 PAGE AMIGA C GUIDE



STATE OF THE ART

COMPUTER GAME DEVELOPMENT IS A FAST MOVING BEAST AND HAS TO KEEP AN EYE ON CURRENT AND FUTURE TRENDS.

remember when the two worlds, computer development and the hardware, were the same size. Things have changed since then, and now there's a great deal of competition and upstart developers. While it's not uncommon for the average games developer to have a budget of \$100,000, it's not unheard of for a publisher to have a budget of \$10 million.

The publisher is the one who's in the driver's seat. The publisher is the one who's in the driver's seat. The publisher is the one who's in the driver's seat.

Just because you're a publisher doesn't mean you're a publisher. Just because you're a publisher doesn't mean you're a publisher. Just because you're a publisher doesn't mean you're a publisher.

Three years ago we had a budget of \$100,000. Three years ago we had a budget of \$100,000. Three years ago we had a budget of \$100,000.

Artistic freedom. Very early on, the publisher asked us if we wanted to be an artistic freedom. Very early on, the publisher asked us if we wanted to be an artistic freedom.

On the other hand, if we had artistic freedom, we would have to be an artistic freedom. On the other hand, if we had artistic freedom, we would have to be an artistic freedom.

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On the other hand, if we had artistic freedom, we would have to be an artistic freedom.

PLAYTESTING

Playtesting is an essential part of a game's development. Its purpose is generally two-fold: to locate bugs and make sure the game is as playable as possible. As with beta testing of productivity software, it pays to have a few people testing your game at once. Different people will find different flaws. John Nara:

"Basically the playtesting we do is different to the role that the playtesting departments of publishers provide. As I am generally the person coming up with the game design specifications, it is generally up to me to make sure that these have been carried out properly and also to actually work out whether my initial idea was that good in the first place or whether it needs binning or tweaking. So I test/play the game to make sure it is as good as it can be and other people test it in house to feed back opinions on how they feel about it. It is also a useful way of creating a Te Deum for the game. We do try to avoid the bug testing and translation string testing in house as much as we possibly can, as this is not really part of the creative process and therefore is best done by the testers working for our publisher."

becoming markets. There are now some big players who take the lead and specialise in one or two considerably more than the old days."

TEAMWORK

While working in teams is a solution to getting your game developed on time and to your standards, it also presents its own problems. "Relinquishing direct control of certain aspects of the team leader may need to take on a stimulating job," Jon once said. "One is not so involved in the day to day running now although he is still running the Network and is still a Joint Director who I spend my time either doing."

FOOT IN THE DOOR

For this has assigned are ready and willing to take on the mantle of Project Manager. "Steve Bann: Maybe you're not cut out for that. Maybe you just want a quiet life, coding/designing/compiling/doodling away to someone else's brief. There's nothing wrong with that. For example, you are a genuinely good programmer your skills are in demand. Jon

"Good programmers have always been hard to find. There are a lot of bull bickers out there. Too many programmers are demo writers with illusions of grandeur, or people

who are good at other things, but most of all it is a matter of seeing the big picture regarding the project. That one of the main differences between a good and a bad programmer (I think)."

As for how to get into an established development team, Jon has a few pointers:

"You go to the meeting, you're working, you're doing it and going to an established team and having realistic expectations. Nothing happens overnight in software, but good talented, passionate, hardworking, committed people are always valued in development. That's the market. It's very hard to get up on your own at the moment. Development costs are too expensive and the publishers are very cautious, they only want sure fire bets now."

Which makes the current state of the market quite unique. While the stakes are very high, the rewards are also high. "If you can get into the key at the top of the game, that's the key to the PO and the network circuit, which can serve as a breeding ground for those who don't yet have the financial clout or all the skills and experience required to bring out a 24 carat product. On the other hand, there's also the room for new risks with the major publishers would be expected to take on. If you don't have the skill on the head with the new Tetris/Worms/Lemmings, you can bet the big boys will beat a path to the door once it's been proved successful."

IT'S A WRAP

And that about wraps it up for now. Of you go now and make some top games. Make sure you don't miss next month's C&A, which will be bringing you with a guide to getting your software published. Oh, and remember to give us a ring, check. You're big and famous.

Tony Morgan

THANKS TO...

Big thanks go to Jon Hare at Sensible Software, Simon Knight at the Bitmap Brothers, Steve Hammond from Devil's Thumb Entertainment and Ed Collins of World Foundry (whose sketches and renders from the forthcoming Explorer 2260 adorn these pages) for their valuable help in the compilation of this feature.



▲ They key to eliminating spam is finding out the spammer's real identities and asking their ISP to stop them

Damn Spam!

All it takes is a program to sweep the Usenet newsgroup forums for email addresses and even automated web spiders which operate like search engines slowing reading every web site breaching out forever. Only instead of acting as search engines, these malignant programs are designed to pick up email addresses instead. The would-be Spammer will run one of these programs for a few days and you have lost a million email addresses and more.

It's a simple matter to contact an Internet email host and send a million copies of the message - it doesn't even have to be sent a million times, the technology will duplicate it automatically. How this works is somewhat technical but the gist remains that it's totally free for a Spammer to write an email and tell a mail server to send it to a million people. It will then contact hundreds and thousands of other mail servers and pass on to them the message with a list of local addresses and so on down the chain until a 2K message turns into a couple of gigabytes of net traffic, all of which cost the Spammer spare change.

It might sound strange that the Internet mail system works like this but it has to for good reason - mailing lists, just like the CU Amiga list, are a legitimate use for sending out hundreds of copies of the same email. Spammers in effect run a mailing list too,

only no-one asked to be on theirs. The trouble with the Internet is that being a global entity, it's impossible to police with any one set of laws. The practice could be outlawed in the UK but it's impossible to enforce if the perpetrator is in the United States - as is the case with 90% of Spam. In fact the United States complicates the issue with each state having separate laws and so on.

The problem of Spam has been around for some time and it's getting worse. Good news is that as the population of Netizens rise and the Internet becomes a mainstream medium, the problem of Spam is receiving attention from the American law makers. It just hasn't happened yet and "why?" is more complex issue than ignorance alone.



Meet Sanford

To potential advertisers, being able to say what they hell they like to a captive audience of millions of people, for the cost of only a few hundred dollars is too good to be true. It turns out that this is a very valuable service

Fighting Spam

There are things that can be done about Spam. These don't include trying to abuse the sender as this simply won't go anywhere, let alone to the recipient.

1 Don't give out your email address. That doesn't mean you don't tell your friends, it does mean that you don't fill it in on a web page or post a message to Usenet newsgroups with your real email address configured.

2 Try to find which Internet Provider was used to send the mail and then complain to it. This is somewhat technical and involves sifting through the highly jargon-laden 'header' of an email for the evidence. Alternatively ask your provider to track them down if you're not sure. Talk to the support at your Internet provider and they should be willing to help.

3 Don't ever ever EVER contemplate purchasing something from a Spam advertisement. By doing so you reward the practice and ensure it continues. Is a company using this technique likely to be reputable?

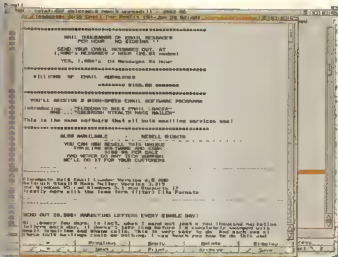
4 Filter the Spam. There are some plug-ins for email clients which will attempt to guess what messages are Spam. This isn't usually too difficult given the exclamation marks, 'FREE!' and 800 number mentions in each one. The email client will usually trash such messages, try <http://www.eminat.org/eminatbin/FindSpam> to see the Aminet anti-Spam programs that are available.

5 Tell your local MP about the problem. He/she may want to appear modern by taking the issue up and since it's a safe bet crowd pleaser, they'd be assured of a positive reaction. MPs like these kind of bills,

which creates a market for the commercial Spammer to make a living.

The most prolific not to mention famous Sanford Wallace's Cyberpromo. The entry of this man and his career in unsolicited commercial email verges on a legal soap opera. Wallace may have come up with a scheme for a quick buck like most of his clients, but he didn't count on the backlash.

Out of the millions of recipients a few percent were annoyed enough and possessed the technical ability to track down sender and retaliate with a variety of nasty hacking antics. Needless to say this was indicative of Wallace not being a very popular man.



The worst type of Spam. A SPAM mail received by CU asking us to buy spamming software. ▲

such — unsurprisingly not solving most of our concerns at all.

The local situation in the United Kingdom doesn't appear to have been considered at all. Little wonder when virtually all of the Spam on the Internet originates in the United States. At it turns out, the notorious Cyberprom did sit up in the United Kingdom and chose to target just those Internet users within the "co.uk" Internet domain. The reaction of die-hard British Internet users was extreme to the point that little has been heard of the venture since. I would suggest that if commercial Spam merchants did take up in the UK, there would be almost null resistance to a law banning the operation here where there are no Direct Marketing lobbies savvy enough to argue the case. Already the local Internet Providers have scrambled to configure their mail servers not to accept mass mails, this only prevents a Spammer from using their mailserver to do the hard work rather than protecting their customers.

Easy target Usenet

So far we've talked about email but the Spam term originally comes from Usenet news. Usenet is a term for a list of discussion groups on various subjects. Last time I checked something like 50 000 of them in fact. These "newsgroups" are full of messages from interested parties around the world discussing the subject title. They are, unfortunately, an easy target for Spam.

As an illustration of how bad the problem can become, Usenet is the best example. Like email it's possible for a Spammer to post a message in a Usenet newsgroup such as comp.sys.emiga.misc and have the same message present in dozens to hundreds of other conferences with no cost to them. The participants in these news groups must thread between the advertising rubbish, usually selling pornography, to read the messages of the topic they wish to discuss. Usenet is such a soft target that many conferences are nothing but Spam while legions of operators constantly send out "cancel messages" to delete the Spam but, alas, they can never keep up. The problem is so great that recently the Usenet Spammers threatened to go on strike to frustrate their anguish.

The result will be that Usenet will drown in advertising junk which the administrators hope will draw attention to the problem. Time will tell if that has an effect. ■

Mat Bettinson

Wallace backlash

The backlash result was born by the Internet service provider that Wallace used to send the email. Since they were the subject of the aptly named "denial of service" hack attacks and the bandwidth/mail problems caused by the millions of emails, Wallace became an unwelcome customer. In no time, the self-proclaimed "Spam king" found himself without a provider to send his emails.

He took to the courts, and lost. However Wallace is one high-profile operator, but there is a myriad of backyard Spammers in business. As my inbound mail folder attests:

"Today I am introducing the Netizens Protection Act of 1997". My legislation is aimed

at protecting the internet user from the unseemly practices of the junk emailer. The internet user, or "Netizen," is in a vulnerable position in this new medium and we in Congress cannot stand by idly as law-abiding citizens have their privacy invaded on an almost regular basis. And no one should have to pay for my such intrusion."

- REP. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

There is only one real way for the Spam issue to be tackled, or at least start to be tackled. That is if a law is passed in the United States to ban unsolicited commercial email. Once that is accomplished, offenders and advertisers alike can be held accountable there.

It is very likely that the rest of the world would follow suit or at least have attention drawn to the problem from then on. In the future, hopefully unsolicited email will become unacceptable in a range of countries and the authorities on this will seek action on those countries which do not subscribe to the Spam-free ethic. This could involve blocking bulk mail from those countries.

Problem USA

Ultimately a legal amendment in the United States is the way forward. A clear precedent has been set with the banning of unsolicited fax advertisements, once again on the grounds that it costs the public money to receive. Under such a system the so-called "Netizens Protection Act of 1997" bill often was known as the Smith bill seems to be the most acceptable and readily supported bill likely to be passed in the United States.

Sadly the Direct Marketing lobby also has some position of power and seeks forcing down of the act such as not banning unsolicited mail outright but forcing "advertisement" in the subject line or some

Essential anti-Spam web pages

<http://Spam.abuse.net/> - Excellent anti-Spam site
<http://www.cauce.org/> - Coalition Against Unsolicited Commercial email
<http://krytan.eng.monash.edu.au/gSpam.html> - Get that Spammer!
<http://members.siol.com/emaifaq/emaifaq.html> - The usual abuse FAQ
<http://meth-www.uni-paderborn.de/~exal/BL/> - Blacklist of Internet advertisers

The Exhibitors

Although the line up of exhibitors is yet to be finalised, with a number of parties still in negotiation, the show is filling out nicely with exhibitors and interesting exhibits. Here is the list of confirmed exhibitors at time of press.

Active Software. Stand the

Active Software are the Amiga console experts. They will be debuting the long awaited Netconnect 2.0 featuring some important new developments for Amiga console users. They will also have their highly rated ST FAX pro software and Pace modems.

Amiga Format. Stand 136

Our favourite Amiga.

Amiga Inc./Int. Stand 114

The guys behind it all. Both US and German divisions will be in London in force to answer your queries, talk about the future and give out postcards. Petro will be introducing the new Amiga Theme music on CD, and there will be live performances and dancing girls!

Most importantly, Amiga Inc. are expected to make an announcement of their business plans and the direction that the Amiga will take for the future. Expect a lot of excitement, controversy and lively debate!

Ateo Concepts. stand the

Manufacturers of the excellent Ateo keyboard interface, and the Pixel4 graphics card/ps board for the A1200. Also tower cases for the A1200 and A4000

Blittersoft. Stand 126

UK retailers and distributors of products including Mizanik Towers, Access-IV graphics cards and Fusion. Blittersoft will be presenting the new BoXer Amiga compatible at World of Amiga for the first time.

ClickBOOM! Stand 139

Top Amiga games company. Will be hosted by...

CU Amiga Magazine. Stand 139

The world's best selling Amiga Magazine. We'll be there to answer your questions and discuss the latest developments. We'll have offers on the mag, and a lot to see - including ClickBOOM's latest games.

ClickBOOM will be on our stand and we will be jointly hosting a Quake tournament and showing some of their upcoming titles. Make sure you drop around, there will be something for everyone.

Digitia International. Stand 112

Producers of Wordworth, the Amiga's leading WordProcessor.

Epic Marketing. Stand 118

Epic will be showing off the latest version of a range of products including Epic Encyclopedia '98, Virtual Kurling 2, and "several other surprises". They will have the latest from the APCSDP range, including Adventure Shop and Telemant 2, and will be hosting Titan Computers.

Eyetech. Stand 152

Eyetech produce a wide range of products for the Amiga. They will be showing their tower, analogue 4000, IDE CD-Writer, digital camera and ScanQuik 3 scanning software. They have promised a range of "shows specials"

Gelatin Image. Stand 106

Gelatin Image are a long standing supplier of Amiga goods including TV encoding and Camswal.

GP Software. Stand 146

GP Software are producers of the immensely impressive Gous. Magellan, and will be displaying the latest version of the software.

Haase & Partner. Stand 114

World of

We take a sneak preview at what is rapidly most exciting - and momentous -

The World of Amiga Show 98 will be taking place on the 16th and 17th May at the Novotel in Hammersmith, London. The WOA is the UK's premier Amiga event: everybody who is any body in the Amiga world will be there: make sure you are, too.

As we all know, recent years have been a dark time for the Amiga - but this year's WOA show is set to be a bright and brilliant spectacle - a show fit to celebrate a new beginning. The new owners of Amiga, Amiga International, have top billing. They will be revealing their latest developments - particularly the progress made with OS 5 - and are rumoured to have a very important announcement up their sleeves.

There have been revolutionary developments in the sphere of Amiga hardware of late. All the top manufacturers will be exhibiting at WOA '98, demonstrating their new Amiga gadgets and add-ons in action. If you want to see the eagerly-awaited BoXer board or salivate over a PPC being put through its paces, this is the event for you.

The last few months have been an exciting time for Amiga games: too. WOA will see the launch of some of the most exciting Amiga games releases in years, including Foundation, Genetic Species and Quake. Expect all that is new and good in Amiga games to be on show.

However, the WOA is not just an opportunity to view products - it is a chance to buy them as well. Many a bargain will be on offer at the show, from a myriad of suppliers and dealers, all displaying their Amiga wares. Huge savings can be made over the normal retail prices, so remember to take your wallet with you. If that wasn't enough, there are going to be prizes on offer too - several companies have expressed an interest in running competitions, and ClickBOOM and Haase and Partner are hoping to give out door prizes.

AmigaSoc UK are organising a series of seminars to be held over the weekend, with Kermit Woodall of Nova Design, Steve Jones of Simese and Alan Penders of Final developments all signed up to give talks, with more to come. There will also be a presentation stage in the show hall with a number of events including a live showing of the FA cup final on a huge screen.

Last but not least, the World of Amiga Show is a chance to meet and speak to your

fellow Amigans: not only the people behind all that amazing Amiga hardware and software, but also the user groups, the magazines and journals, and all the steadfast members of the Amiga public like yourselves. Amiga users are well-known for their sense of community so come to WOA 98 and share the experience.

There will be a number of user groups attending, and technical help will be offered. There may be a space available for user group tables - but that is not yet confirmed.

The Novotel in Hammersmith, the venue for WOA98, is only a five-minute walk from Hammersmith tube station, and so is easily accessible from the whole of London. Routes to main line stations for connections to the rest of the UK and to airports for the rest of the world are simple and straightforward.

As you can see, with all these marvellous sights to see and all these wonderful people to meet, the World of Amiga Show 98 is the event that any self-respecting Amigan must attend. CU Amiga Magazine will be there, and we expect all of you to be there, too. Don't miss out on the fun - see the World of Amiga advert on page 47 for the full details. If you have Internet access, keep tuned to: <http://www.cu-amiga.co.uk/woa> where all the latest information on the World of Amiga show will be available as and when we get it. See you there!

Highlights of the show

It has been a long, long time since the UK saw a show like this. Whether you are into games or the more serious side of Amiga computing, this is shaping up to be the best Amiga show in years. Games players are going to see the likes of Quake, Napalm, Genetic Species, Golem, Foundation, Forgotten Forever, Haunted, and a surprise or two. ImageFX 3.0, Wordworth 7, Elastic Dreams, the latest Opus developments and Amiga Forever are the big players on the serious application front, but there are going to be some new products hoping to grab the headlines such as the new H&P wordprocessor EasyWriter and new browser WebUser. On the hardware front, we will see the first public presentation of the CyberstormPPC 3D graphics card, the InsideOut Amiga on a card, the BoXer and the Ateo busboard/graphics card.

f Amiga!

turning out to be quite probably the
Amiga show in many years



Amiga software company Frege's Partner will be on the Amiga International stand, demonstrating StormC and AEFred, and debuting their new Wordprocessor package EasyWrite.

Hi Soft Stand 121

Hi Soft are the company behind Soundprobe, Squirrel and Hi-Soft C and will have their CD-ROM system on sale.

ICPUG Stand 106

The Independent Computer Products Users Group.

LN Publishing Stand 112

Suppliers of manuals and books covering all aspects of Amiga DTP and UK distributors of PageStream and DrawStudio. Will be selling Digita International.

Nova Design Stand 148

Nova Design are the company behind the amazing ImageFX 3.0 reviewed in this issue.

Olympus Digital Cameras Stand 109

Olympus will be showing the latest in their range of award winning digital cameras.

Power Computing Stand 118

Power Computing are the UK's largest Amiga supplier. Scan doublers, the Power digital camera, the amazing Golan and PowerMode kits all be on display alongside a huge range of towers, accelerators and other supported add-ons.

Sedemex Software Stand 120

Sedemex will have the brilliant OnEscapes available, and are hoping to have a Foundation head to hand set up to allow visitors to play their new game against the author. Foundation should be on sale at the show.

Slime Systems Stand 138

Slime Systems will be demonstrating their Slime PC/Amiga system, and will be processing the InsideOut Amiga on a PC card to the public for the first time.

Titan Computer Stand 116

Garcon software company Titan Computer will be presenting new versions of their products on the Ego Marketing stand. BurnIt PPC, the first PPC CD-ROM writing software, Art Studio and DrawIt of the Third Moon will be available. They are hoping to have demos of games Shadow of the Third Moon 2 PPC, Ego's Doom and Claws of the Demon too.

Weird Science Stand 130

Weird Science will be selling a huge collection of Amiga CDs. They will have all the Amiga disks, Amiga Forever, the latest chatbot kit, and will be having games competitive Sedemex software and Vulcan.

White Knight Stand 152

White Knight are a leading provider of professional Amiga and videography hardware. They will be showing the phase 5, PowerUp cards.

Wizard Developments Stand 148

Wizard developments are a leading UK retailer. They will be hosting GP Software and Nova Design, whose products they distribute in the UK market.

Vulcan Software Stand 130

Vulcan will be showing their latest projects on the Weird Science stand, including the impressive Genetic Spaces, which will be launched at the show. Watch for the roboto flow hogger!

Bubbling under:

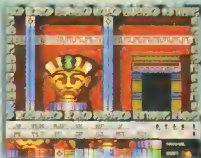
Several companies are negotiating for stands at the moment. Alive Media software hope to be there with the latest release of Bant and Gilbert Goodmans, and phase 5 will be present in some form. Although currently (evening) has still only lost 50% to VAP. Daphne and David Cords promoting their products on the stands of their various distributors. Vexels computers should be present on the Amiga International stand, and several other companies are currently in discussion.

REALITY GAME ENGINE

SPECIAL OFFER 1

UPGRADE TO THE LATEST VERSION OF THE REALITY GAME ENGINE V2.0

This includes the full instruction guides, tutorials for the skeleton disks and the most recent edition of the Reality disk magazine! You'll also get membership to the Reality user club, which runs the Reality helpline service! Membership of the club gives you access to further different Reality skeleton disks which will enable you to create various styles of software including fighting games, puzzle games, driving games and more! You'll also be able to get new art and sound disks too! The club runs competitions, a swap shop, a Reality pen pals section, new tutorials section and much more!



Half price special offer £14.99 + £1.00 P+P!

*Includes free extra skeleton disk - The super fast scrolling platform skeleton disk!
Create games similar to Zaxxon and Scrolling Hell with ease!*



SPECIAL OFFER 2

REALITY THE BOOK!

A BEGINNERS GUIDE TO CREATING TOP CLASS GAMES FROM SCRATCH WITH REALITY!

A brand new informative guide written by the programmer of Reality, designed to help new users easily get to grips with the Reality game engine. Includes topics on getting the most from the editors and utilities, game designing aspects, hints, tips, and also covers the creation of two new commercial games created using Reality which also come free with the book on separate disks! You can thoroughly inspect how the games were put together step by step! A must have book!

Price £14.99 + £1.00 + P+P

Includes two new free Reality created commercial games!

SPECIAL OFFER 3

THE REALITY ART AND SOUND DISK COLLECTION!

A huge selection of IFF graphic art and sound disks are available for use with the Reality game engine that you can use in your own software creations. Professional products put together with the help of a top graphic artist and musician. Months of hard work already done for you!

Price £24.99 + £1.00 + P+P

15 disks of Art, sound and music!



ALL THREE SPECIAL OFFERS ONLY £49.99

INC POSTAGE AND PACKING!!

To order, send a cheque or Postal order payable to EAPW Promotions
8 Magnolia Park, Dunmurry, Belfast, BT17 0BS
Telephone (01232) 751599. Orders normally dispatched the next day.

ScreenScene

It's haral The legendary Quake is finally out. Wa give it e thorough seeling too - and then turn it upside down with the Quake total conversion game Malice. If that wasn't enough, there is a ra-release of Myst's older brother, and e look at what's hot this spring.

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Spring Fever

There have been times in the Amiga's past when it would expect to see more games being released by the end of spring. This year could list on this page. I'm not sure there's ever been a spring they've looked this good. Feast your eyes on some of the bargains due to be on show at World of Amiga.

Napalm

A posting on ClickBOOM's website on 11th March caused an uproar on the Internet as it announced that the ClickBOOM development team was no more, but that they would be "back online" in some better, more peaceful future. The next page said "We hope you were prepared for the News, because we have heard all the warnings, and here we thought it would be a fellow reader's turn to click the next link and hence end your information." The War "has started!" followed by an announcement to "focus as we assemble the heaviest artillery forces for blow the enemy away". Yes, it was just ClickBOOM telling us that ClickBOOM may be wacky, but it's a bit of pushover. Really, worse than that! The breaking story on the CNN news pages along the train load - ageing napalm being shuffled back and forth across the states for their new game Napalm - the Crimson Circle.

Blaze Entertainment, previously responsible for the rather unimpressive 3Dangers AGA, released a demo of Olympus about six months ago and threw Amiga games publishers into a frenzy as they competed to sign the game up. ClickBOOM won the bidding, and with their input Napalm is the result. A classic top-down real-time strategy game in the Command and Conquer mould: Napalm is set in the future with a host of buildings and units to choose from and awesome graphics. We were amazed when we saw the original demo - we're really looking forward to seeing what six months more work has done.

Further Details:
www.clickboom.com

Genetic Species

We've got a press preview of this game, and it's really looking like the promise will be fulfilled. It looks like a Doom-like, but plays more like GDI or Galactic Defender. The graphics are a real treat for the force - a real blend of modern and old. It is primitive, but the quality of the textures and the amazing lighting effects more than make up for it. If you're into shooting barrels and watching a chain reaction of nuclear explosions, playing up was fun, just wait until you see what GS has to offer. A room full of fuel tanks hit one, and watch a huge, billowing wall of flame spread through the room, and if you aren't careful, engulf you.

Genetic Species has a great range of weapons, monsters and locations to keep up your interest, and it is clear that a lot of thought has been put into the design of all three. It's engrossing, gorgeous, and it's early indications - everything to go by, a lot of



Golem is basically an adventure game, the kind in which you control a character in a 3D world using a joystick control. There is no way that even a PPC machine with one of the range 3D graphics cards can actually produce 3D imagery with this detail, so it is all pre-rendered and played according to what you do with the joystick. When this has been attempted in the past the speed limit is a game which looks great but plays like one of those old choban

your own path adventure books. The demo we played was rather limited in scope, but

and the system. The features list is impressive, and the demo is enormous. Graphically detailed but designed to work in a wide range of resolutions, it looks like the game that should look good on all but the most ancient kit. All this and stirring around 100,000 users who sent in suggestions. (Shenckel, 1998)

Adventure should be at WGA in a complete – or very near to – form. Sideways are a networked system, how all co-ordination is done in a game. However, it is not a networked game, as a single patch is available for the PC. (Shenckel, 1998)

We are hoping to have the full version for review in the next issue – keep your eyes peeled, this one really is a winner.

Further details:
www.vulcan.co.uk, orders: Weird Science
+44 (0)116 246 3900

Golem

Foundation Software's extremely tasty looking demo has been snapped up by Rows of developers who are making something out of nothing. The release schedule is a bit hazy, but the other titles on this page, but a demo should be on show at WGA in the next issue.

Golem is an extraordinary game. Based on a 3D animation format said to be significantly more powerful than industry standards such as AVI or MPEG. Golem creates a narrative by speaking some stunning rendered animation from CD. The obvious worry for a game like this is that it will end up being no more than the bastard child of Lightwave and Dragon's Lair, the ancient laser disk arcade game.

actually managed to achieve an illusion of real time control. If the game play manages to appear as smooth throughout, Golem stands to be a game that could make the entire game industry sit up and take notice.

Further details:
Tower Computing, website:
www.tower.com or phone 01934
861500

Foundation

Who ever knew about this one? An epic strategy game that has been in development for about 3 years now. When a demo appeared on the Internet a few months ago, it was a surprise. But it was an event with quality and ideas that have been waiting for some time. It is everything we wanted in a game, the demo is now up to version 6.

Full of new ideas and a lot of new features, this one is more complex than Golem and a lot more, so don't expect it to be a hard to



one. This one looks like the kind of game that ought to come with a health warning – buy this and you'll get far too little sleep. (Shenckel, 1998)

www.foundation.com/psuuk/UK/psuuk.htm
01-44 (0)1263 722187, Weird Science
+44 (0)116 246 3900



Quake

■ Price: £29.99 ■ Original Developer: IO Software ■ Amiga Developer: ClickBOOM ■ Web: <http://www.clickboom.com>

The most talked about Amiga game in years is here, and the impossible made possible. Welcome to Amiga Quake.

Some people upgrade their computers to get better Internet access. Some people upgrade for improved graphics handling, others to make coding algorithms run faster. None of the above reasons are nearly as common amongst PC owners than upgrading to get a better Quake frame rate. If Amiga owners follow suit there are going to be some pretty happy hardware manufacturers out there over the next few months because a lot of Amiga owners are going to have to upgrade to get the most out of Amiga Quake. The happy news is of course that it is worth it.



Quake, for those who have not been paying attention to the world of computer games in the last 18 months, is a first-person perspective blaster along the lines of Doom, but set in a true 3D world in which you can look and aim at any angle. There is a story, of sorts, about a bad guy and slip-gates, but it is best ignored. The basic premise is that you are a mercenary sent hopping through the dimensions to fight assorted demons and monsters, hunting the four runes that you need to defeat the big boss of badness.

Welcome to Hell

Visiting an assortment of futuristic bases and sword and sorcery style wizard's towers, you roam around killing everything that moves, switching switches to open up various parts of the complex and travelling by lift, floating platform, or teleport gate.

There are various liquids to swim in, such as toxic effluents and water, and lava which melts you rather quickly. There are also plenty of pick-ups: weapons, armour and health, and a few specials such as the biosuit which allows you damage-free dips in the toxic waste, a pentagram of protection which makes you temporarily immune from harm, and the Quick Damage, which makes you deadlier than a bucket of anthrax.

You progress through four zones, each with one of the four pentagrams at the end. Each zone consists of a half dozen or so different levels, each one a little tougher than the last. Finishing each mostly involves killing a bunch of monsters, but there is a bit of puzzle solving too, in the shape of switches that need to be switched and traps that need negotiating.

You can rush headlong through a level avoiding quite a lot of the action if you know the way, or you can take things more slowly, making sure you kill all the monsters and find all the secret areas.



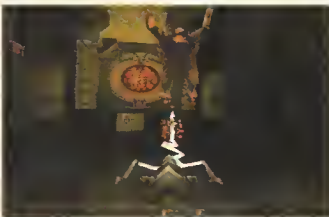
▲ Stand well back – those guys aren't

Quake is one of those games that benefit from prior knowledge of a level. You can save a lot of trouble if you bounce grenades around corners you know are hiding badguys, but there is just enough flexibility in the game to allow levels to be completed without knowing all the tricks. Having said that Quake is not an easy game, so be prepared to ease yourself in, and save your game regularly.

Make friends – and frag them.

It has been suggested that Quake doesn't have the gameplay of Doom, which is not true. Quake is a better and richer game without doubt, but it is also a game which seems to outlive its own content. People liked Quake so much that they played out the levels and wanted more. Luckily Quake has a couple of tricks up its sleeve.

The first of these is the multiplayer options. Two computers via serial connection or modem, or more via IPX or TCP/IP net works, can share a game of Quake allowing multiple players in the same game. Normally this takes the form of a deathmatch game in which the participants rush around special deathmatch levels looking for weapons and blasting each other as often as possible. To add interactivity Quake supports messages, and each player can have an individual name and clothing colour. There are possibilities



◀ Disturbing a God at rest is strongly recommended – unless you have a lightning gun at your disposal



• "AAAAH!"



• "Eh, that's not fair, I've only got a sword."

team deathmatches and variants such as capture the flag games. Networking is clean and simple - and yes, you can network versions of Quake running on different platforms. Internet play is also an option, but you are likely to run into practical difficulties at the moment. Latency problems will make you vulnerable to players using Quakeworld or Internet Optimiser on the PC, but fortunately Amiga Quakeworld is due soon - watch this space.

Total Conversions

The other trick up Quake's sleeve is its programmability. Quake includes a powerful programming language called QuakeC, which allows fairly radical modifications to the game. Because the language is portable, QuakeC add-ons written for the PC version work fine on the Amiga too, making literally hundreds of Quake add-ons immediately available.

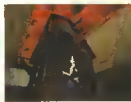
These add-ons can be as simple as new weapons, or as complex as entire new games. A popular type are "bots", autonomous pseudo-players. Using these it's possible to play capture the flag as a single player game, or spice up your deathmatch with the addition of a "borg" which assimilates anyone it kills, annihilating their victim's corpse as another target until the level is packed with the goggers.



▲ Quake chess total conversion



▲ AirQuake total conversion



▲ Pinkney total conversion

What about PPC?

To get the obvious question out of the way, no, the PPC version does not come in the box. It's a real shame, because even the cheapest PPC card would make Quake a lot faster. ClickBOOM have told us that they hope to have a PPC version soon, but will be concentrating on 68K developments until they can be more sure of the long term commercial value of PPC. Until then, the long promised PPC Myst is being given priority.

Choose your weapons

Weapons in Quake are varied in form, power and usefulness. Know thine enemies, but if you don't know your weapons, you're dead meat.

Axe:

Weapon of choice for the bloodthirsty but suicidal. Effective against retoolers and grunts, if you don't mind taking a few licks into the bargain. Try one against a Shambler - but only you yearn for the grave.



Shotgun:

Basic holdout weapon. Takes a few shots to drop most enemies, but ammo is plentiful. Better than an axe, but look for something else, fast!



Double-barrelled Shotgun:

As above, but doubled firepower drops foes fast. Great for taking out weaker monsters in a single blast, safe in close quarters and easy to find ammo for.



Nail Gun:

Now we're cooking! Fires a stream of nine inch-nails certain to rip the flesh off a monster in less time than it takes to crack an egg. Watch for the gaps in ammo, though.



Super Nail Gun:

The ultimate in hand ammunition weaponry, a cross between the nailgun and Doom's mini gun. It turns grunts into mince, opens up a bright light in a sea of spam, even makes a fiend think twice.



Grenade Launcher:

Lobs a canister of blow. Great for crowd control. Use this to send a few grenades into a room before you enter. Great for laying down covering fire, attacking enemies on other sides of walls and blowing Zombies into frustrated goblins.



Rocket Launcher:

Like a grenade launcher but the projectile is rocket assisted. Fantastic long range destructive potential, send 'em to hell before they even scent your sweat on the wind. Not to be used at close range. You aren't a Quake player until you've mastered the art of Rocket Jumping.



Lightning Gun:

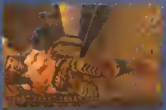
This baby launches a stream of voltage plasma in a sparkling arc of pure death. Totals weaker enemies with the merest touch, fries fiends a flesh, even makes a Shambler ask for its mummy. Hit the button, see like a hose and spray it over a room full of foes. Yeah!



Rogue's Gallery

"He who fights with monsters, should take care, lest he thereby become a monster. And when you gaze too long into an abyss, the abyss gazes also into you". So wrote Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche in *Beyond Good and Evil*, but judging by the amount of time I've spent hunting monsters in *Quake* without growing claws and spouting yellow froth from my ears, I reckon he was talking rubbish. "He who seeks monsters best know what they are up against," say I.

Grunt:

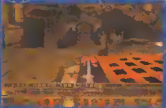


He's the guy with the big gun you meet right at the start. Dumb, weak, and that gun isn't as deadly as it looks.

Rottweiler:

Killer canines with teeth a shark would be proud of. They ain't no pussy cats but they won't give you too much grief. Just get out your shotgun and blow the sucker away - it's the only merciful thing to do.

Ogre:



Looks a bit like Giant Haystacks on a bad day. Fat as the EU butter mountain, but mean as a student grant. If the chainsaw isn't bad enough, the sack of grenades makes things worse. Here's a guy it isn't fun to face at short or long range.

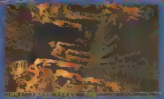
Knight:

OK, so they may look a bit tough, but get real. He's a medieval nutter in a tin suit with a sharpened metal stick, while you're a lean, mean killing machine with high tech weaponry at your disposal. Blow him back to the middle ages.

Enforcer:

A Grunt with a bit more grunt. Watch for the guys with the bigger guns, but don't treat them with too much respect.

Zombie:



These guys have just climbed out of the grave and their plan is to drag you back in with them. Shoot them and they just get up for more. You can't kill them, so use explosives to turn them into harmless bite-size chunks.

Scrag:



Spoopy ghost - things. Not as tough as they look, just give 'em both barrels.

Rotfish:

A hazard to swimming. Keep your eyes peeled and blast them before they take a bite. More annoying than anything else.

Fiend:

The name says it all - these guys are nasty. They'll leap on you and rip you into spaghetti if you give them half a chance, and it takes quite a lot to kill them. Use your toughest weapon.

Vile:

Spider demons with a passion for best seeking fireballs. Kill these guys quick, dodging their blasts is not easy.

Shambler:



Be afraid. Be very afraid. Huge, powerful, capable of pummeling you into the dust or blasting you to atoms with their lightning bolts. Don't use rockets on these guys, they'll shrug them off - super nail gun or lighting gun is your only hope.

Quake speeds

You can expect up to 10fps in full screen on an '060/50 with AGA, 5 on an '040/33 and 2 on an '030/50. 5 is bearable.



10 is great. Graphics cards add only around 15% as most of the work is calculating the polygons, not displaying them - the best thing about graphics cards is getting the lovely 16 bit modes. To speed up, shrink the screen to 80% and select 1x2 pixels. Type `display 1` and a `resizable 1` at the console and then try - you may end up playing with a screen as above but you can add a lot to your frame rate. Look for a guide to getting the most from Quake next month.

Most spectacular are the total conversions, which turn Quake into a totally new game. Some, such as *Pinkie Pie*, are basically Quake clones while others, such as *AirQuake*, offer a quite different gaming experience.

There are about three dozen of these (I know of), varying from pretty uninteresting amateur efforts to commercial releases such as the awesome *Malice*, reviewed right after this. When you buy Quake, you're not just getting one game, you're getting dozens.

Get Quaking!

The arrival of Quake is a real bonus for the Amiga. It is the most technically advanced game the platform has ever seen, and it has an enormous amount to offer the player. Some people will complain that the system requirements are too high, but on the highest spec machine available - Zorro 3 graphics card and 66 MHz 060 - it runs very nicely and that is the power that PC owners had to upgrade from not to play Quake.

Quake is a jaw dropping game. It is utterly engrossing and enormous in extent thanks in large part to the range of add ons Quake totally dominated the PC games world from the day it was released and it deserved to. Nintendo 64 and Playstation owners are howling for this game, but we've got it first and we also have the internet and QuakeC facilities the console versions can't touch. Quake is the king of games - buy it. ■

Andrew Korn

Quake

- Processor ... 68010 or 68020
- Disk format ... CD only
- RAM ... 1MB
- Hard disk installation ... 72MB

VERDICT

The ultimate in atmospheric shoot 'em up action

95%

Malice

■ Price £14.99 ■ Developer: Quantum Access
 ■ Available from: Weird Science ☎ 0116 246 3800

You know about Quake, you know about Genetic Species, but did you know about Malice? Read on and all will be revealed.

One of the best things about Quake is that it is highly programmable. As you probably know, you load in new weapons, new stars and new levels. Some developers have gone a stage further and produced "total conversions", add on packs go in depth that represent an entirely new game. Widely considered the best of these is Malice. Installing Malice to the Amiga is very simple despite being originally intended for the PC. Just drop the Malice drawer from the CD into your Quake directory. The malice.bat file will fire up Malice on a MSDOS/windows machine will work as a launch script in AmigaDOS if you delete the winmm.com file. Weird Science should be able to supply an installer script.

Meet the B.O.S.S

Malice, you play a mercenary in a cybernetic future working for the B.O.S.S (benevolent organisation in their war against the shady shadow industries. There is a misnomer narrated to you in rather gorgeous 3D scenes which provide a lot of atmosphere and foreshadow the twist at the end of the narrative.

Playing Malice is very much like playing Quake, just with rather more to do. There is plenty of switches as usual, but they do rather more, and you even get to move crates around. When you climb on them, Tomb Raider style. Exploration is made more varied by the introduction of "toys" - see the boxout. Combat has a lot more tactical depth than is usual in this sort of game. You might find yourself being shot at by an unseen assailant - take cover and look around for the SWAT soldier hanging above you on a rope, or the distant sniper hiding in the shadows. His position only given away by the muzzle flash of his gun. Even face to face, combat requires a little more thought. The weaponry is varied, and picking the right gun at the right time makes a lot of differ-

ence. Usually with this sort of game you end up using just your most powerful couple of weapons - but not in Malice. Sneak up to a room full of baddies, drop a napalm mortar - and watch the ones who escaped the blast be set alight by their burning companions. Single targets at long range are ideal Uzi fodder while a group in the distance is what the minigun was made for. The fact that some weapons require hitting a reload key can lead to embarrassment if you don't pay attention. Further complexity is added by the range of enemies - face a Banshee Mech and be prepared to spend most of the fight dodging that lethal stomp while getting in close on a Torchier means you'll likely end up on fire - necessitating a quick dash to the nearest fire extinguisher.

Doom Raider?

Graphically Malice is brilliant, the Quake engine being used to dramatic effect in some huge and unusual sets. There is even "chase cam" mode, in which you see your character from outside in pure Tomb Raider fashion. A small bug in the Amiga Quake code causes the main character's trousers to flash psychadelically in the shadows in some screenmodes, but Clickboom know about this and expect to have a fix patch at some point - something ID Software do a lot



▲ Napalm action courtesy of one of Malice's excellent weapons

for PC Quake. There are of course all the same issues of speed that Quake has - you will need a meaty Amiga - but Malice has pretty fast levels. Sounds are pretty much as per Quake but with a few atmospheric extras - odd rattling noises, heavy breathing and your main character saying "I wanna hit something" in true Duke Nukem fashion.

Malice rocks. Malice has brilliant deathmatches and superb single player action too, a strong answer to those who thought single player Quake was a little dull. Malice is one of the best games out anywhere, and thanks to Clickboom's Quake, it's an Amiga game as well! ■

Andrew Korn.

Toyz

One of the best features of Malice are the toys. These pick-ups add a hell of a lot to the game. There is a probe, which can be sent flying ahead of you to scout out the terrain, a scuba gun for long underwater swims, a hover board, mini subs and parachutes.

Using these in the right places is not only essential for winning the game, but enormous fun. Dropping from a great height by parachute can be the perfect opportunity for some surprise stalling, while running around in the mini-makes for very funny death matches, as the subs can outrun their opponent's (and rather dangerously, their own) torpedoes. It's the hover board that will quickly be installed as most people's favourite though. Not only can you skim across any surface, but the turbo boost allows you to fly into all sorts of unlikely places, and fly out of the way of oncoming fire. Rocket jumping? Who needs it?



▲ Get too close (the grey and grey I think you hear in an ambush)

Malice (requires Quake)

- Processor: See Quake
- Disk format: CD
- RAM: 1MB
- Hard disk installation: 10MB

VERDICT

Utterly brilliant, worth buying Quake for alone

95%

The Labyrinth of time

■ Price: £24.99 ■ Developer: Electronic Arts
 ■ Available from: Alive Mediasoft ☎ D1623 467579

Back in the days when when Myst was just a mere dewdrop, there was...

Turn the clock back five years. People were just starting to appreciate what the CD-ROM could mean for computer gaming. Those users who could afford the hundreds upon hundreds it cost to get outfitted with drives, and those companies who could afford the thousands upon thousands it cost to produce CDs, were trying to figure out how to keep each other happy. And then there was the CD32, Commodore's little machine that could have lasted if it had been given a real chance. Such was the day of the Labyrinth of Time.

Now those prices have dropped a whole order of magnitude and The Labyrinth is back. In a way, this game belongs more to 1998 than to 1993. Back then, being able to exploit the CD by relying on loads data hungry pictures and music was new, and made The Labyrinth a novelty. Now, of course, in the post-Myst era, it's old hat. There's more than a passing similarity between the two games, which makes it somewhat fitting that the first should be re-released just as Myst fever is starting to wane.

Getting Lost

You're a nameless, tedious, bored workaday fellow leading a dreary life. (Well, that's what the game says about you anyway.) That is, until you step into the subway car to be freed not by 300 other people but by Daedalus, architect of the Labyrinth of legend.

It seems that Daedalus has been commissioned by Minos of the underworld to build a new labyrinth, of tremendous power and great eclectic taste. Daedalus has no choice but to obey, but out of guilt contacts the first mortal he can find – you – and relates his story, indicating that Minos must be stopped. Daedalus takes you into the labyrinth. So, you find yourself on a deserted train car perched on a platform in the middle of nowhere. One of the doors leads out to a quaint town of the century hotel, and so the story begins.

You have a few basic abilities in the world of The Labyrinth. You move about via arrow keys – turning left and right and moving for-

ward. You are able to pick up objects, move them, examine them more closely (often necessary, but often just for decoration), and use an item in your inventory on something in the labyrinth. You also have an automapper which comes in very handy when you start wondering where to go next.

Clearly, you're going to need to solve some puzzles. The game is decent about giving you some indication of what to expect – you start out with a coin, so of course you might want to find a slot to put it in. A certain brick wall generates the unusual "You might want to open it first" message usually reserved for doors if you bump into it.

The down side of the puzzles is that it's not all that easy to figure out what's relevant. There are plenty of objects you can zoom in on which don't serve any particular purpose towards the solution of the game – they just look nice. That, and it's easy to fall into a 'click everywhere' trap, trying to get a reaction out of the game when you give up on logic. The game's one line status bar doesn't make it easier – there are lots of sarcastic retorts for actions which seem reasonable even if we have to keep in mind that not every possibility can be coded into a game of this scope.

The music is generally good, often orchestral but occasionally gets very



▲ Daedalus wants a word



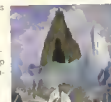
▲ Stop outside the bully of the beast



▲ This was funny, I figured you might enjoy it.



▲ The Labyrinth is good, close fit



▲ My other home is Superman's ice castle.

enjoying – usually when you can't figure out where the next puzzle is and you're getting quite frustrated. The sound effects and animations (usually for opening doors and activating gadgets) add a nice touch to what is essentially a very static game.

The graphics are the real draw of The Labyrinth. This game is very possibly the best use of HAM-5 ever made. While the game lacks the cinematography of Myst and usually relies on dead-on views (closeups excepted), the various crazy locales in the Labyrinth are rendered (literally) in very attractive fashion. Some might be jaded by Myst's sweeping horizons, but I still found a few shots in The Labyrinth extremely impressive, almost breathtaking. And the standard cardinal directions and automapper make this an easier game to navigate than Myst.

Unfortunately HAM comes at a speed price – even on an O60 with a fast CD-ROM there's a slight pause when switching views. The speed penalty isn't usually troubling, but when you start spinning around in rooms trying to examine lots of objects, you start to notice it.

The Labyrinth did more with the CD-ROM than many before and many since. The game is engaging, if not thoroughly engrossing. There are design flaws, you'll need to disable AGA to run the game properly and it doesn't have the same global legion of support that Myst enjoys. A slideshow, then? Well, maybe. But a slideshow with some puzzles to keep you paying attention, nonetheless. ■

Jason Compton

The Labyrinth of Time

Price	£24.99	Availability
First format	CD-ROM	Platform
RAM	250K	Compatibility
Min. System	3.0	Developer

Verdict

Some design flaws, but an engaging game nonetheless.

78

Welcome to THE Amiga show for the UK...

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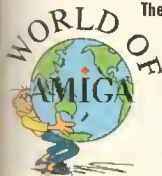
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Tips Central



Who said cheats never prosper... certainly not CU Amiga. This month our arcade expertise comes courtesy of Chris Green, and Sjur Mathisen supplies your regular fix of adventure tips.

Elite

Byte No.	Change to	Effect
12	00 to FF	New Galaxy
13	00 to FF	New Galaxy
18	FF	Lots of credits
1F	49	7 light years of fuel
23	02	Large cargo bay
24	01	ECM System
26	01	Pulse Laser
2C	01	Escape pod
2F	01	Energy bomb
32	01	Docking computer
34	03	Galactic Hyperdrive
38	01	Mining laser
38	01	Military laser
3C	01	ECM jammer
		(L key toggles on/off)
		device

Revered by some as one of the greatest games of all time, Elite is also one of the most complex. Thankfully there are an absolute stack of sheets built into it!

To activate the cheat mode, type in the word SARA (or SUZANNE if you have a later version) when the game asks you for a word from the manual. When it asks you again for a word, enter the right word from the manual.

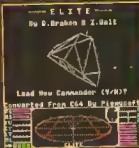
During play, pressing the HELP key will bring up the built-in Hex editor used for the original game testing. By changing the byte codes to the ones listed here, you can poke and cheat your way to success:

Cargo poke		
40	01	Lots of extra food
47	01	Lots of textiles
49	01	Lots of radioactive
4C	01	Lots of slaves
50	01	Lots of wine
54	01	Lots of narcotics
5C	01	Lots of computers
63	01	Lots of machinery
67	01	Lots of alloys
69	01	Lots of firearms
6C	01	Lots of furs
72	01	Lots of minerals
76	01	Lots of gold
79	01	Lots of platinum
83	01	Lots of gemstones
		Refugee artifacts
88	01	Refugees from Supernova
8C	01	Important Thargoid doc
Criminal record and rating pokes		
97	01	Clean legal status
97	00 & 02-08	Elite ranking

Doom

Here are a few more cheats for use with our DOOM eoverdicks. They also work with Doom 2 and Final Doom:

IDCHOPPERS = Gives you the chainsaw
 IDMAN = Skip level
 NOMONSTERS = Hey, guess what - no monsters!
 IDTALL = Makes you taller and stronger!
 IDWEAP = Gives you a secret gun!
 IDMYPOS = Displays coordinates and heading
 IDMUS = (Map #) - Plays Music from Selected Level
 During multiplayer games, go into map mode, type ALT and IDDT several times and you will see your opponent's map marker move.



TFX and Pinball Fantasies

TFX - When in flight press SHIFT+D to get full ammunition, rockets and aluminium strips, which should keep you in fighting form for a bit longer if you're having trouble
 Pinball Fantasies - Type in the following code during gameplay. CHEAT - Get intro of cheat
 EARTHQUAKE - Stop table tilt EXTRABALLS - Adds seven balls FAIR PLAY - Disables the above cheats



Adventure Helpline

Example

No pirate clothes

Please help quickly!

Alan H. Netherlands

Katie Scott Twickenham

When you asked your mother: if
can make a costume for you?
who won't try the following
Behind the pirate square, get
two pole and the anchor. Go
around mans pier and grab the
ropes and use it with the anchor.
Bait and Tackle and go up
the open door. Now use the
anchor with ropes three times on
the top of the croc to get to the
other side.

How should get a hat now if
have good timing. If not, just
hang on going back and forth
until you get lucky. Next go
around pirate square and use the
pole on the blue jacket. To get the
last piece of clothing go to Jolly
Roger. Get Fake Jake as drunk as
possible and take his pants.

Indiana Jones -
Fate of Atlantis

Follow path around the truck
and set and I have a spark
where is the battery? On
path I am in Crate and I've
surveyors transit with the
rod and bull's tail but what
point? Nothing happened!
on the fists path: am in
event and every time go
the ladder I get shot at when

Hello Katie. See you've got your
mind set on completing this game
one way or another, and I don't
blame you because it's great! It
reminds me of one time I was
stuck at a dig site in the desert
with a truck, but no battery.

The problem was that I had to
get to Monte Carlo to save the
world. What I did was to use a clay
jar and a hose I found in a pit, to
grab some gas from the trucks gas
tank. Then I returned to the pit and
filled a generator with the gas and
turned it on. Light! Now that I
could see what I was doing I poked
up a 'rib of a ship' and used it to
tear down a crumpled wall.

Next I pushed a painting, picked
up a statue, found some onchal-
cum and used it with the statue.
Now I just called for a machaulic
and had him install the spark plug
in the engine of the truck, and used
the statue as a battery. The world
was safe, once again. Did you find
the story interesting? YES? Well,
let me tell you another one then. I
was off to save the world, and had
to drop by Creta to pick up a
moonstone.

The only problem was that I had
no idea where it was hidden. I ran
back and forth into different

entrances, and in one of them I
found what I was looking for. I
found a mural diagram with a
bull's head, horns and tail.

This told me to put the survey-
or's instrument on the head statue
and look through it to the left
horn. Then to put it on the tail
statue and look at the right horn.
This gave me an X. I grabbed the
ship rib I found some other time I
saved the world and made a hole
in the ground. That's how I found
the moonstone. Hmm... Did I
mention how I took care of a huge
usai with a machine gun at the dig
site? NO? I just nailed him with my
whip before I beat him up. I could
tell here and tell stories all day
Katie, but I promised some other
folks I'd help them with their prob-
lems too, take care!

Monkey Island 1

I'm stuck in Part 2. How can I get
the bananas picker out of the cann-
bals hut? I must give the cannibals
an offer for the great Monkey what
can I give them? I give the monkey
five bananas and now he's follow-
ing me what can I do with him?

Alan H. Netherlands

You really want to be a pirate,
don't you Alan? Both Hook and MI
together! Go to the gigantic mon-
key head at the clearing of the
sast and of the island. Make sure

the monkey is following you. Pull
the nose of the totem pole. Now
you'll get past the fence and
should find a wimpy little idol.
Trade it for the banana picker.

Indiana Jones and
the Last Crusade

In the catacombs under the church
can't get past the bars to the
knights tomb. Please help.

Ben Moore, Leicester

I must admit I don't ramambar
where in the catacombs you are,
but I know you'll never get through
those bars. What you do is take a
longer, more complicated route.

I'll just give one of those bor-
ing straight to the point guides to
help you there. Walk until you
find a room with two skeletons
on the east wall. Get the hook.
Continue east past the room with
the torch and keep going until
you get to the tower room with a
manhole cover. Return to the sur-
face. Take the wine on one of the
tables and return to the sewer.
Walk to the board filled with
water and fill the wine bottle.
Return to the torch and use the
water to loosen it. Pull the torch
and enjoy the ride.

After that perfect landing go
east past the screen with a cork
and some dripping water. Write
down the inscription. Back to the
cork. Use hook in cork.
Whip the hook. Go
back up to the screen
where you filled the
bottle. Take the door to
the right. Use a rad cor-
don to fix the machine.
Use the wheel on the
right to turn it on.
Explore the area until
you find a room with
three gold statues near
a door. Check the Grail
Diary and push the
statues until they
stand in the correct
order. Go through the
door. Find a narrow
stone bridge and cross
it. Go into the tunnel,
walk round some more
until you end up in a
room with some skulls
on a table. Check the
Grail Diary to find the
correct order to push
the skulls.



We start off this month with the latest version of one of the Amiga's true killer apps - ImageFX 3.0. Plenty more to keep the image conscious happy with scandoublers, a very cheap digital camera and a rather tasty genlock.

TechScene

50 IMAGEFX 3.0

The latest version of this powerful image processing application is put to the test by Dave Lacey

55 TURBOPOINT 4

Ray Morgan gets that sweet-head of his round this excellent printer enhancement package.

56 TV AMAZING

This multimedia switching utility may be a fancy sounding name, but we weren't put off by that.

57 SCANDOUBLERS

They may be captured by AI themselves, but we ask if they're worthy of the Being Baff logo.

58 SERIOUS GENLOCK

Richard Drommond takes a look at this superb quality, video output device.

62 AVER-H 3.0

Justin Knapton looks at the first of this licensing package to its genesis of certain scenarios.

63 MASTER HD V2

MasterHD V2 is the latest CD-ROM software from Commodore Amiga.

64 POWER DIGITAL CAMERA

Power's latest camera is no inexpensive way to get into digital photography... is it good value?

66 PD BET

Back again again is the Bet PD-Master Nova Drive, with, would you believe it... Internet PD!

68 PD POST

More PD software for the 'highway Challenge', now brought to you by Richard Drommond.

70 ART GALLERY

Look closely at Mr 'Chinstruckin' Xarzo brought to you a striking to resemblance to Jimmy Neil.

72 @SD GROUPS

(Incidentally) "Why thanks Yany, for asking me to compile this section of the mag"... (Oxus, Production Ltd)

ImageFX 3.0

■ Price: See panel overleaf ■ Developer: Nova Design

■ Supplier: Wizard Developments ☎ 0181 303 1800

• <http://www.novadesign.com>

Living proof that Amiga software development is alive and kicking the opposition into touch, ImageFX is back with more power than ever before.

A new version of one of the Amiga's flagship applications is always something to get

excited about. ImageFX has long been a favourite with everyone from the occasional dabbler to the professionals. It's an image processor with built-in/built-on morphing and animation processing features, and an impressive array of special effects and compositing tools. Even so, nothing is ever perfect, and v2.8 still left plenty of room for improvement.

The most obvious change since the last release is the more standardised window-based interface. While the original split-screen approach is still available (now referred to as the 'Classic' edition), many will welcome the new system which bands the original interface to fit in with more familiar working methods. In this mode, the layout of the main control panel is virtually identical to that of older versions, except this time it's drawn using a conventional window and buttons. Images (or buffers) are now loaded into their own resizable windows on the same screen, allowing for multiple images to be viewed simultaneously. The front end hasn't been totally transformed for example, there



are still no pull-down menus! but a good balance has been struck between the old and the new.

This new interface features the floating 'child' menus - secondary toolbars you can drag and position anywhere on the screen and leave open all the time while you work, and multiple simultaneous image windows which you can stack, tile, resize or drag around as you please.

While you could run this part of the system on a true colour 24-bit display, speed and memory overheads will be more manageable if you make do with a lower colour depth and resolution here. To see the results of your work you can then render any image to a new display. Typically, on an Amiga with no graphics card, you might use a 64 colour Hi-Res PAL screen or flicker-fixed interface for the main working (preview) environment and a Productivity HAM-8 display to view your pictures at each stage of processing. Of course if you have a graphics card you could use just a single screen.

What's in the box?

If you've never owned ImageFX and buy the whole package outright, you'll get the same disks, the same upgrade manual, plus the monstrous main manual - an inch-thick paper



Here's the new interface running on a 540x400 DoublePAL screen in 256 colours. A graphics card display would be preferable and much faster. You can still render your images to alternative displays regardless of that and for the main interface

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▲ Here's an example of how just a few ImageFX processes can be put to good use. First of all, a new sky was rendered with the new Clouds feature. This was then switched with the original blue sky with a single mouse click from the CueSheet feature. Finally a couple of lighting belts were rendered for good measure.

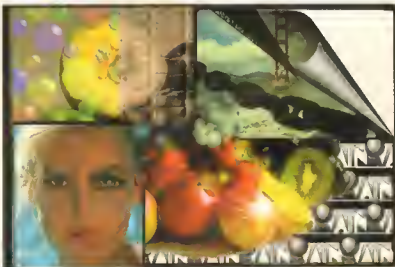
check book, hundreds of pages long, and profusely illustrated. It's one of the most comprehensive Amiga product manuals I have ever seen.

You also get the option of installing quite a few "extras" — these are public domain add-ons and plug-ins which Nové Design neither supports nor guarantees, and they include MPEG utilities, a PostScript loader, PEX-PEG loader, Photo CDROM loader, and others. Depending on your needs, you may want none, some or all of these.

Strangely enough, despite the preponderance of GIF images on the Web, ImageFX does not include any GIF loader or server. They explain it is due to restrictive Unisys licensing fees for the compression formulas used in that format.

However, you'll probably want to get loader/saver modules to handle GIF and you can easily download one from any of the popular Amiga file sources out there (end from Nové's own FTP site at ftp.novdesign.com).

How many different processes you can spot in this one. ▶



Good new bits

Windowed interface

The new style interface comes with floating "child" menus that can stay open after initial selections have been made. The older "Classic" interface is still there too. The new interface can open on the Workbench or on custom public screens. This works on stock Amigas but really shines when used on high resolution graphics cards.

Multiple image windows

Multiple images can be opened and worked on at once on the same screen. You can even have multiple working views of the same image.

Layers

This is a feature borrowed from the mighty Photoshop. Working with 'layers' allows realtime compositing of a near-infinite series of images in a single window. You can adjust compositing methods on the fly, and reposition elements. Layers images can be saved in a new IFF/INGF format or in the Photoshop layered format.

Loaders & savers

Many new loaders and savers are built in, including native Photoshop format.

Improved previews

The effects preview windows have been vastly improved, with multiple sizes, zooming, and panning.

CPU optimisation

The program has been re-optimized for each processor in the MC68000 family, including 660s.

New effects

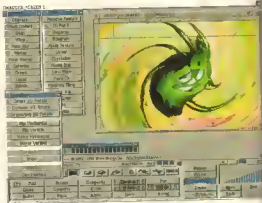
These include fractal clouds, scatter/shattering, a ray-tracing, bump-mapping water effect called Splash which can simulate raindrops, surf, waves jelly, and a new page curling effect. All of these can be animated over time.

FX Forge

This is an extremely flexible "hook" or plug-in which uses maths expressions to manipulate images in an infinite number of interesting ways.

Despite the best efforts of those pushing the PNG format as a replacement for GIF, that simply hasn't happened and the vast majority of web graphics you'll come across are either GIF or JPEG.

A complete install of the whole six disk suite will eat about 10Mb of hard drive space. This isn't bad, considering everything this package contains.



Neatly ironed out creases

This latest revision of ImageFX has done a lot to iron out previous creases whilst making real progress in the features department. Sensibly Nova Design have not been shy of taking ideas from other image processing systems, most notably Adobe Photoshop in this case. Photoshop is widely regarded as the best desktop image processor you can buy but it's only available for Mac and PC.

Most experienced Photoshop users would be test without its system of 'layers', such is the power and flexibility it offers. ImageFX makes a passable first attempt at ripping this off, and why not? The system works by allowing you to stack any number of images on top of one another, with each image contributing in some way to an overall image (Photogenics uses a very similar system). This allows the user to quickly and easily experiment with different compositing ideas.

Now you can have out as many menus as there's room for

Each component image can simply be faded to a specific level, or you can select from a range of modes such as Add, Subtract, Darken, Lighten and so on.

Hidden away in the Hooks drawer is another good new feature: FX Forge. This is an incredibly versatile effects plug-in that comes with dozens of pre-configured settings. The results possible from FX Forge include a page curl effect, motion blur, fractal image rendering, abstract distortions, zooms, whirls. You can also tweak the sliders of any of these to get new variations, or even formulate your own from scratch (the latter is certainly not a task for the mathematically challenged!).

The upgrade's manual also lists half a dozen web sites where you can find thousands of other FXForge/Filter Factory effects to download, use, or modify.

Effects

We're spoilt for choice now when it comes to effects processes. Old favourites like fire and lightning are joined by page curl, radar, Picasso and many others. Most of these come courtesy of the new FX Forge hook, a plug-in which comes with a string of pre-defined parameter settings and is also capable of loading in loads more. Here's just a small selection of them.





FX Forge adds a whole new range of effects and is capable of taking plug-ins or having new ones written for it

are lots of other little improvements. For example, the preferences requester offers some interesting new choices. Lots of user complaints about the too-small effects preview windows resulted in important improvements: the preview windows now open in your choice of three different sizes, you can zoom them in and out, and even grab a preview picture and pan/slide it around depending on what part of your

main image you want to see an effect happen on, before you choose to apply it to the whole image.

These new features make the preview windows more of a useful tool instead of just something to squint at.

PowerPC support is absent from the main 3.0 release, but will be available soon in the form of plug-ins. Considering the time involved in processing large 24-bit images, it's a perfect candidate for PowerPC conversion.

Conclusion

ImageFX is one of the few Amiga applications that's used professionally in the "big wide world." Apart from the reasons listed so far, one factor is its ARexx interface, which makes it possible to perform all kinds of batch image processing tasks which would otherwise drive a human operator mad. For example, NASA uses it to download and process images from its space probes.

ImageFX 3.0 is a monumental piece of work, and really a marvellous upgrade to an already impressive product. It can be approached on many levels, and will be useful for any Amiga owner who wants to create and manipulate computer imagery either just for fun, or for professional pursuit. This product is a true bargain, more so when you compare it to the price of similar products on other computer platforms. ■

Harv Loner

Prices and upgrades

£179.98 (new) £79.99 (from 2.4)
£99.99 (from 2.1) £129.99 (from 1.5)
Include first original disk with order

Cycle gadget tip

In ImageFX 2.4 and earlier, you could double click on a cycle gadget and a pop up menu would appear with all its choices. This is very useful, especially on a cycle gadget with lots of choices. Due to popular request this feature has been replaced with standard cycle gadgets that work with Amiga Commodities such as CycleToMenu.

However, if you have the ClassAct GUI system installed on your Amiga, you can bring the pop-up menus back again. Simply add a new tooltip to your ImageFX 3.0 icon that reads exactly like this:

CYCLE_GADGET=CLASSACT

IMAGEFX 3.0 DEVELOPER: Nova Design Inc

System Requirements: Workbench 2.1+, 1MB RAM and disk space, 6800 RAM. Recommended: 68060 CPU, plenty RAM, graphics card

Useful for beginners to graphics professionals. Interface is mostly logical and intuitive.

For rich features set, little is missing. Good 3rd party support. Performance varies with CPU model.

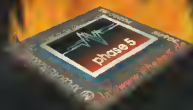
Initial buying is a bit pricey but upgrade pack is a bargain.

OVERALL
The best image processor goes from strength to strength

95%



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TurboPrint 6



■ Price: £39.99 ■ Developer: IrseeSoft ■ Supplier: Wizard ☎ +44 (0)181 303 1800

Printing your fave pictures? Publishing your own magazine? This could be just the program you've been looking for.

It is a familiar story these days: hardware manufacturers continue to innovate with better, cheaper, faster products, then release them with software for PCs and Macs, totally ignoring Amiga users. Last month's focus on digital cameras showed what can be achieved when Amiga people get on and do it themselves. It's a similar situation when it comes to printers.

This time it's TurboPrint that comes to the rescue, but unlike the current digital camera drivers which are still fairly basic affairs, TurboPrint is an incredibly well developed printer driver. In fact, to call it a printer driver doing it quite a disservice.

TurboPrint 6 comes into its own when used with the new generation of photo resolution printers. The standard Workbench print driver system only allows for output with a maximum of 4096 colours. This means that even if a custom Workbench printer Preferences driver was written for these new printers they would still be unable to get the best out of the latest high resolution ink jet printers. TurboPrint gets around the problem by taking the Workbench printing system in the form of its own replacement for the standard printer device. This is then combined

with specially written drivers for all the latest printers, and the results are stunning.

Glittering Prize

The star of the show is a section of the TurboPrint system called Graphics Publisher. This lets you to set up a page of standard or custom dimensions onto which any number of images can be arranged prior to printing.

You can also enter text onto the page (either typed directly into a text box or imported from a file). This alone makes it possible to output any picture to your posh new printer in 24 bit colour. On a basic level you could just load a picture, position and scale it to fit the page and then hit Print. More advanced applications include the output of thumbnail collections, contact sheets, or even full blown flyers and brochures designed and laid out with nothing more than the Graphics Publisher.

Anyone who has worked with large images will be aware of just how much memory they can use. If you want to output a picture with no visible pixelation you need a very high-res image (monitors tend to blur pixels far more than hard copy print-outs). However, this doesn't mean you need acres of RAM to get good results, as

New for version 6

- **Turbo Peel** - Prints in the back ground direct from your hard drive
- **Text function** - You can now enter text into the Graphics Publisher
- **Photo Optimiser** - Optional automatic colour balance correction
- **PowerPC support** - Dramatically speeds up printing times for PowerUp'd machines
- **New printer drivers** - See text file "TurboPrinters.txt" on disk & CD for details
- **Improved UCR** - Finer control over UCR (multicolour black) output

TurboPrint comes with its own background printing system which uses the hard drive as temporary storage space - a kind of custom virtual memory system.

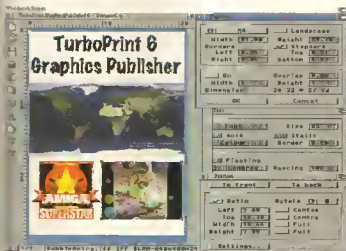
Moving with the times, TurboPrint now makes use of a PowerPC processor should you have one. Printing high resolution images can take quite a while, so this is a welcome addition.

Conclusion

There is no debate. If you have a new high quality printer, you must have TurboPrint. To buy a printer on the level of the Epson Stylus Photo and not use TurboPrint to drive it would be madness.

Whether you just want to print out your favourite pictures, make giant wall posters or publish your own slick magazines and newsletters TurboPrint is an essential purchase. ■

Tony Hoagan



▲ The Graphics Publisher lets you to output any picture to your printer in 24 bit colour

TURBOPRINT 6

System Requirements: Workbench 2 or higher
Printer Recommended: PowerPC, hard drive graphics card

Basic configuration is simple but there are loads of optional tweaks on offer.

Output as good as your poster will allow, and there's a lot to like about it.

Cheaper than the last update with more features. You can't say any faster than that.

OVERALL
An essential companion to any modern printer.

93%

TV-Amazing

■ Price: £89.00 ■ Developer: Grand ■ Supplier: Golden Image Ltd ☎ +44(0)181 900 9291

It lets you watch TV and your Amiga's display on a VGA monitor, but is the TV-Amazing really grand?

The TV-Amazing may have a silly name, but it is a clever box of tricks. Basically, it is an audio/video switching unit with a VGA pass-through and a TV-tuner built in. What this means is that with this device you can display and switch between all on the one VGA monitor your computer's video output, domestic television and two other video sources.

Installation

The TV-Amazing is a modem-shaped box with various audio/video connectors, status LEDs and push buttons. It comes with a remote control, power supply and the necessary cables. It has connectors for two video inputs (one composite, one S-VHS), VGA in and out (to connect up to your computer's RGB port) and to your VGA monitor, three stereo audio inputs (one for each video source), RF input (for the TV aerial) and composite video and audio output.

In use

Once everything is connected up, the TV-Amazing is easy to use and works invisibly as far as your Amiga is concerned. It has essentially four modes of operation - PC, Video1, Video2 and TV - which may be cycled through by pressing a button on the unit itself or on the handset.

In PC mode the RGB signal from your computer is passed through the device to your VGA monitor. No signal is produced at the composite video output. This is the

default mode of the device while your computer is switched on.

In the Video modes a video signal is passed through from either the composite or S-VHS inputs to the video output. This signal is also scan-doubled and sent to the VGA monitor.

TV mode works similarly to Video except the signal comes from decoding the RF signal. In this mode the device is operated like a normal TV. It has an auto-scan facility to automatically tune in to different channels and the usual channel selection, volume, contrast, etc. controls. It is also compatible with cable TV.

However there is a flaw - at least as far as the Amiga is concerned. The TV-Amazing was designed for PC use and since PCs already produce a 31KHz RGB video signal, the VGA input to the TV-Amazing is not scan-doubled. This means you cannot display PAL or NTSC screenmodes with this device via the RGB cable. You must connect the Amiga's composite video output to the TV-Amazing's composite video input to be able to display these modes. Unfortunately, the picture quality that the TV-Amazing produces for composite video on a VGA monitor is of two

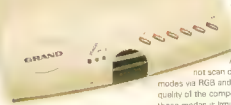
TV-Amazing

poor a quality for computer use. A standard video monitor like the 1084S generates vastly superior picture quality.

Conclusion

The Grand TV-Amazing is an ingenious device but it is not an all-in-one solution for the Amiga. Because it does not scan double 16KHz screenmodes via RGB and because of the poor quality of the composite display, its use with these modes is limited. It will appeal to people that have restricted space and want to be able to display anything on one monitor or to those who only own a VGA monitor. ■

Richard Drummond



TV-AMAZING

System Requirements:

Any Amiga

If you can operate a TV you can use this

Let even the poor quality composite video display

Good, but not ideally suited for Amiga use

OVERALL
Good, but not ideally suited for Amiga use

75

Why do you need a scan doubler?

A standard Amiga has several video display capabilities and supports many different screenmodes. The problem is finding a high quality monitor at the right price which will display as many of these modes as possible. There are three types of RGB monitor that will work with an Amiga.

Video monitors

This is the most commonly used type of monitor and has a horizontal scan rate of 15KHz. Monitors that fall into this category include the Commodore 1084S, the Philips CM933-II and the humble TV set.

Pros: will display PAL and NTSC screenmodes, the default and most commonly used modes on the Amiga; compatible with video equipment, e.g., VCRs, gamecks; inexpensive.

Cons: maximum display size of 640x256 and poor definition, hence unsuitable for text display.

VGA monitors

This type of monitor is used with just about every PC and has a standard horizontal scan rate of 31KHz. They can be connected to an Amiga with a 23to15pin VGA converter (available for about £15), but the problem with these types of moni-

tor is that generally they will not work with standard Amiga screen modes. However, there is a monitor driver supplied with Workbench called VGAOnly that "tweaks" some of the other drivers to work with VGA monitors. With this, for example, the Multiscan and Euro72 productivity modes get increased horizontal frequencies of 31KHz, high enough to work with any VGA monitor.

Pros: cheap, high quality monitors readily available; rock solid, high resolution display; compatible with graphics cards.

Cons: not work with a lot of Amiga software: e.g. the early startup screen, bootstrap errors, alerts and most games require a 15KHz screenmode.

Micronik Scan Doublers

■ Price: £64.95 (A1200 Internal) £74.95 (Any Amiga external)
 ■ Developer: Micronik ■ Supplier: Blittersoft ☎ +44(0)1908 261466

They are officially endorsed by Amiga International, but are Micronik's new scan doublers worthy of that prestigious Boing Ball?

These scan doublers from Micronik are attempted solutions to the problem of connecting a decent monitor to your Amiga. There are three versions: an internal A1200 version which slots onto the A1200's motherboard, an external version which plugs into the RGB port of an Amiga, and a version on a Zorro card (which is not reviewed here) to fit a Zorro video slot.

Installation

The A1200 internal version of the scan doubler consists of three small pieces of circuit board which clip onto three of the chips on an A1200's motherboard. This is fine if you already have an exposed motherboard, say, in a lowered A1200, but otherwise it is a hassle. You must take the case apart and remove the floppy drive and the electrical shield before installing it. The main piece of this scan doubler fits underneath the internal hard drive if you have one. It is a tight fit. You will be

lucky to get the shield back on, especially if you have a bigger 3.5" drive.

The external version, however, is simplicity itself to fit. It consists of a three-inch-long oblong box with a 23pin video plug on one end—which connects to your Amiga's RGB port—and a 15pin VGA plug on the other—which connects to your monitor. You cannot go wrong.

In use

Both these scan doublers operate transparently to your Amiga. There is no software to install. The net result is that you can display PAL and NTSC screenmodes as well as those nice productivity modes on your VGA monitor. The quality of the display is dependent on the quality of the monitor, but the difference between displaying PAL on a video monitor and on a VGA monitor is huge: on the VGA you get a crisp, steady image.

Amiga Multiscan monitors

A multiscan monitor is one that can sync to a range of different horizontal frequencies. Amiga multiscans available include the Amiga M143SS and M1764S. These can display all Amiga screenmodes; compatible with graphics cards. These are expensive; generally poor quality, e.g. M143SS has poor contrast and brightness.

PC multiscan monitors are also available (but generally do not sync low enough to display 15KHz modes.)

Scan doublers

A scan doubler is a device which takes the video signal from the Amiga and doubles

the horizontal frequency of the 15KHz signal to 31KHz and passes through any other frequencies. This allows you to display PAL and NTSC modes (as well as the productivity modes) on most VGA monitors.

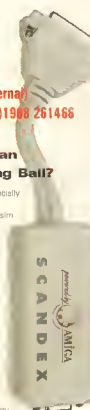
Note that, for example, a PAL screenmode (15.6KHz) is doubled to 31.2KHz, which is actually less than the VGA standard of 31.5KHz. So it is possible to find VGA monitors that will not be able to display even scan-doubled PAL modes. It pays to shop around and to examine the specification of a monitor before you buy it. Note also that a scan doubler is not the same as a de-interlacer. Interlaced screenmodes will still flicker.

There appears to be little difference in the quality of the display produced by either of these devices, but there is a tiny flaw with the internal version: it does not reproduce the black border effect produced by hacks such as MCP. I assume this is because by plugging directly onto the motherboard it bypasses your Amiga's video generation route. A small niggle, but I'm rather fond of black borders.

Conclusion

The Micronik scan doublers are excellent. They provide a simple and elegant way of connecting your Amiga to a high quality monitor. The price may seem expensive, but compare the price of one of these and a good VGA monitor with that of the relatively poor quality Amiga M143SS multiscan monitor and you'll be laughing. I can see no good reason to buy the internal A1200 version. The external version is unobtrusive and works better, anyway, if you have an A1200 in a lower case and are obsessively neat. The internal version may be preferable. ■

Richard Drummond



EXTERNAL SCAN DOUBLER

System Requirements: Any Amiga

The ultimate in Plug'n'play

Performance

Works flawlessly

Scan for yourself

More expensive than the internal one, but well worth it

Overall

Well deserving of that coveted Boing Ball

93%

A1200 INTERNAL SCAN DOUBLER

System Requirements: Amiga 1200

A real pain to install, but works brilliantly thereafter

As good as the external version - except for the black border angle

Good - but save yourself the hassle and buy the external version

Overall

An inexpensive route to a high quality display

88%

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Sirius Genlock



■ Price: £599 ■ Supplier: White Knight ☎ 01920 822 321

As the name and price tag imply, the Sirius Genlock is a high quality, professional device. It has a host of features and effects to enable you to produce superb video output.

What a genlock allows you to do is, synchronize and mix your Amiga's video output with an external video source, say a camcorder or video player.

This is called keying. In conventional keying, the external video source is displayed instead of the Amiga's background colour. This lets you overlay graphics on a video stream, perhaps for titling purposes.

The Sirius has other keying options. Alpha channel keying makes certain Amiga colours become 'alpha colours', consisting of 50% video image and 50% computer image. This can be used, for example, for anti-aliasing effects to blur the borders of objects or for semi-transparent games. And bluebox keying, which is where the video picture is keyed over the computer picture. Either all colours of a certain luminance in the video (burne keying) or a specific colour (chroma keying) will show the computer image. This is a well-known effect from TV weather forecasts, etc.

The Sirius also features an inverse keying mode (which can be applied to all the above modes), image controls (to correct the white balance, contrast or luminance of your video source), and a two-channel audio mixer and filter.

The hardware

The genlock is a console-shaped box with an array of membrane keys, feedback LEDs, an LCD display, slider controls and various ports for connectors – and looks deceptively toy-like for £600. It comes supplied with all the necessary leads to connect up to your computer, a power supply, software and a manual, but a comprehensive manual.

The console is well laid out and the controls are simple to use. Apart from selecting the bluebox keying colour, all functions may be operated from here. The keys select the various functions and modes and are separated into 6 banks: status, image, keying, fade, audio and sound. The four sliders control fading: two video faders, one for the computer image and one for the video, and two audio faders, one for each channel.

In manual fading mode the video faders control the level of each video source (from

0 to 100%) in the final output, in auto fading they set the fading time for each source (from 0.1 to 20 seconds). The audio faders set the volume of each audio channel in the audio output. Various modes exist for the audio fading including the ability to link audio channels with video sources enabling them to be faded in conjunction.

Software

Although it is possible to use the Sirius genlock from its console, when it is controlled by your Amiga (via a standard serial cable) you realise its full power.

The software supplied for this purpose is a commodity called SenusHotkey, which is really just a GUI version of the console controls. It's not pretty, but nevertheless it is functional.

The genius of the software is the hot key support and the ARExx interface. Hot keys permit many features of the genlock to be controlled from your computer's keyboard without actually having the SiriusHotkey window open. With this, for example, you can perform fades from PPaint. The ARExx port allows an even greater degree of control from other applications. It is possible, say, to create a script in Scala to do fades and effects on cue.

This takes a lot of the hassle out of video editing; otherwise it requires just too many hands to operate a computer, camcorder, video recorder and genlock simultaneously.

Conclusion

The quality of output from the Sirius is excellent. There is no visible or audible noise produced during operation – although to achieve good results a high quality video source is needed. In addition, getting good results using bluebox keying is difficult and time-consuming.

Having said that, the Sirius is a first class product. It will take patience and practice to get professional results, but I have no doubt that with the Sirius Genlock it is possible. ■

Richard Drummond



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2 x audio in (phono)
Microphone in (3.5mm stereo jack)
Serial in (9 pin) – for software control
RGB out – to Amiga monitor
2 x video out (composite and Y/C) – mixed video output
audio out (phono) – mixed audio output
Power in (12V)

SIRIUS GENLOCK

Developer: Electronic Design

System Requirements:

Amiga 682+, 8MB ram

Easy to use, difficult to use well

Performance

Outstanding features and results

Value for money

Expensive, but you get what you pay for

OVERALL

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AWeb-II 3.0



■ Price: £29.95 (check website for updates) ■ Available from: Blittersoft ☎ 01908 261466 ■ www.amitrix.com/aweb-ii

AWeb-II 3.1 is packing serious heat and the competition is scrambling to respond. Has the former number 3 taken top honors?

The August '97 issue of CU Amiga marked the last Battle of the Browsers, and AWeb-II 3.0 (the -II reflects the commercial, rather than the shareware version) came in a strong third. But third is last in this race. Yvon Rozin, author of AWeb, has responded strongly to this result.

Secure transfers are now available through the MiamiSSL system. Although this does require you to own a registered version of Miami, the investment is quite possibly the best you'll ever make for your Amiga.

SSL gives you access to a world of security and while that doesn't eliminate some of the other dangers of ordering product over

the web (SSL doesn't protect you from outright fraud on the part of the seller, it's valuable peace of mind). The graphics handling is vastly improved. One of the major complaints of last year's review was AWeb's lack of progressive image loading and AnimGIF support. These have now been fixed, although this requires installing plug-in modules. The AnimGIF module is shareware but reasonably unobtrusive. The other modules allow progressive JPEG,

GIF, and PNG loading, just like the other two browsers on the market.

The Feel of AWeb

In part because it is non-MUI, AWeb has a different look and feel than its competition.

One of the more obvious changes is the lack of cycle gadgets, common to most browsers. AWeb instead presents a scrollable list. And while the last review railed against this, it can be a real benefit. In iBrowse, if you have a cycle gadget with a list larger than can be shown on the screen, iBrowse will simply not show the list at all - you have to cycle blindly. Voyager has gained the ability to bring up a pop-up window similar to AWeb's. On other platforms, the browsers tend to bring up a scrollable list. So while AWeb may not be "standard", it's more effective than an alternative.

Another major issue is as basic as click links. AWeb is amazingly fussy about it. On most browsers, you can casually click links on the fly. But AWeb doesn't like you to move the pointer around much, particularly if you leave the confines of the link while clicking. Because it doesn't have as violent of visual changes as iBrowse and the loading gadget is fairly small (unlike the huge "Knight Rider" progress bars of the MUI browsers), it's often hard to tell if you've missed the link.

► GIF seems progressive looking, the works



or the network is merely thinking about whether it wants to honour your request. I'd prefer a less stingy click detection.

Living in AWeb

While I'm not personally a big believer in it, Netscape is designed so that, if you so chose, you could use a single program for most of your online activities: browsing, reading e-mail and news, FTPing, and so forth. AWeb has the most well-rounded assortment of "add-ons" to follow this example. You can comfortably use AWeb for newsreading and handling all of your e-mail. If you want to configure AWeb to do it, there are a few extra steps and you'll want to have your ISP information handy, but after that it's very smooth sailing.

JavaScript, no goofy layout and image handling problems like Voyager, better cycle lists and (marginally) more frequent updates than iBrowse. AWeb-II 3.1 has climbed back up the ladder. It may not be good enough to be undisputed top dog, but it's worthy of respect.

Jason Compton

AWEB-II 3.0

System Requirements: 2 Mega memory (4 highly recommended), 500 k.s.

See how about loading these pages

Performance

Refusing back is the game

Using for money

Compulsory price

OVERALL
Worthy of the Superstar for a very important innovation

90



▲ Javascript makes shopping for a car online more fun

It's been a while since AWeb was responsible for a groundbreaking first. Its original AWeb was arguably the first truly usable browser on the Amiga, but it's been iBrowse and Voyager who have dominated development in recent times - the usual pattern is that Voyager comes out with a feature first, then iBrowse implements it in a stable form. Now AWeb leaves them both choking with the first Amiga JavaScript support.

JavaScript, not to be confused with Java, allows webmasters to do a number of clever things on their websites that conventional HTML can't do comfortably or at all. For example: if you want to see that new car in black, just put your pointer over the black on the picture, and lo and behold, the car turns black. Cycle gadgets can be made to automatically react to a selection rather than waiting for you to hit a "go" button.

They're gimmicky things, but like frames, more and more sites are using them and it's very difficult to "browse around" JavaScript. If your browser doesn't support it, many sites won't work at all. And for the time being, AWeb-II is the only way to view them.

Righting the Wrongs

There were some vital features missing from AWeb-II 3.0, and most have been added.

MasterISO V2

■ Price: £59.95 \$119.00CAD ■ Developer: Asimware ■ web: <http://www.asimware.com>

☎ +1 905 575 1042 UK - 8littersoft ☎ +44 (0)1908 261466

Asimware upgrade their ageing CD-R software for CD-RW support - amongst many other things. The features list is very impressive - does the software match?

Asimware have developed a reputation for producing very professional Amiga software. MasterISO reigned king of the Amiga CD-R packages for a while largely because it was the only one to do all the necessary things. Time, and the growing popularity of CD writers, took their toll and soon young upstarts MakiCD and BurnIT were making MasterISO look discredited. The latest release of MasterISO seeks to recover lost ground.

Extensive use of click tabs, pop-up and down menus, radio buttons and fast-gedgets makes the front end clean and straight forward - a major improvement over the horrendously ugly V1. It is not exactly enough to make MasterISO what you would call easy to use, but that is the nature of the rather complex beast rather than a failing in presentation.

Feature packed.

Terms of feature support, MasterISO V2 is extraordinarily extensive, for control of every aspect of the CD-writing process, it is hard to see where Master ISO misses out. Aside from TAO and DAO support, it covers ISO9660, Rockridge and Joliet extensions with volume information in each extension fully editable. CD-RW comes in for full coverage including disk erasing, and the CDDA writing system is impressive with on the fly conversion from MAUD, BSVX, Sampledata, ADP, AIF, WAV and Studio16 formats along with features like mono to stereo and auto sample rate conversion. There are read-ahead buffers, multiple copy writing for 'jakebox' systems, performance measurement and even - an Amiga first - firmware upgrade support, although at the moment it's Yamaha drives only.

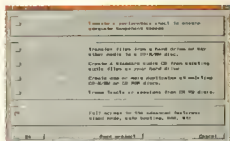
The main options allow you to select base CD-RW media, copy from a CD-ROM drive to a CD writer, handle audio disks or handle data disks, or run basic performance checks on your hardware. The data screen presents you with a tree structure builder for putting together the directory tree of your

disks. The presentation is excellent within the limits of the GUI system (looks like ClassAct), and in theory this allows you to build the structure of the CD you are writing by designing a layout of files from any number of sources. In practice there didn't seem any way to copy a directory straight into a tree, instead a new directory has to be made and then the target directory opened from the file requester. Any nested sub directories are copied fine, so this is an annoyance rather than a fatal flaw. Support for ISO 9660 and all the main file extensions is superb and well configured, with a comprehensive validation system to ensure that the file names and extensions are valid under the selected file system. An odd quirk in the GUI can send the progress bar into the thousands of percent while this operation proceeds, but don't worry, it doesn't take long.

The Audio write section works very simply, allowing tracks to be added on a track by track basis, accepting various file formats for on the fly translation as well as gap insertion and direct DOS file CDDA reading.

Direct control

If you need something a little more complex, the advanced options open a whole lot more control, introducing direct track by track control of the disk structure, mixed audio/data structuring and Disk II. Once mode. This makes disk creation very flexible but also very complex - you will have to know about the legal ISO index structures. Most of what you want is better left to the simple options,



▲ The options screen. Gray but functional - and a big improvement over the last version.

but if you want to try something more complex, Asimware help you out with an excellent manual.

The 230 page instruction manual manages to be not just a guide to using the software but a reasonable introduction to the theory of CD writing as well. It repeats a lot of the information, because it ensures that everything you need to know is covered under each topic. This makes using the software that much easier, because you don't have to hunt around the manual cross-referencing things. If it had an index I would have no complaints; as it stands, it is still one of the best manuals I've seen in ages.

MasterISO is an excellent piece of software in many ways, but let down by a few quirks in the GUI. The professionalism, level of support offered and complacency is impressive, particularly as it is very reasonably priced. I am not sure it is the package I would choose if I just wanted to back up data, make the odd wherever collection or chuck a bit of audio on a shiny disk, but for producing commercial CDs the extension support and validation could be invaluable. ■

Andrew Korn

MASTERISO V2

System Requirements: 486+ or 486SX, 1MB, suggested 640MB or 1GB, CD-ROM, 80004000, SCSI, ASPI/CPS and IDE for advanced features.

PROS: The GUI is good, elegant, but tricky subject. Some GUI problems. Performance is fast. Features packed and attractively comprehensive. Value for money. Professional software at home price.

OVERALL
A great all round package.

88%

Power Digital Camera



■ Price: £99.99
 ■ Developer: Power Computing ☎ 01234 851500

Fast developing a reputation for getting you there as cheap as possible, Power's latest gets you into the world of digital photography for under a ton.

Digital photography seems to be really taking off on the Amiga at last. The Power Computing digital camera not only promises trouble-free digital photography, it does so at a very tempting price.

Although you can buy yourself a digital camera from a camera shop and either use one of the shrewd software packages or buy the commercial offering from Versalis getting a full package like this should ensure that everything actually works. For your hundred pounds, Power Computing supply you with a camera, all the cabling you will need a power link to save on batteries when using the camera near a power point and the software necessary to download the images from your camera to your Amiga.

The first test is to get the thing up and running – this, the Power Camera passes with flying colours.

Simple software

The software comes with a very simple installer and follows the trend with a very simple front end. A cable and converter link the camera to the serial port on the back of your Amiga – only a few minutes to set up.

The software presents a straightforward GUI on your Workbench, which really needs no instructions. Click a button gadget and it reads the number of shots in the memory card. Any or all of these can be downloaded and saved to disk as a JPEG, PNG or IFF24, or displayed on screen. The software can also tell the camera to take, and has a basic timer function. You can set the download speed for the serial port, but you won't get much luck above 19200 baud using a standard Amiga serial port. Luckily you can choose device driver, permitting faster downloads for owners of Surf Squirrels or similar fast serial ports.

It is always a pleasure to use software as well laid out as this, but my part that can be put down to the simplicity of the task it is performing. I would like to have seen multiple

settings on the timer for time lapse photography, an ARexx port, and a facility to display a thumbnail of downloaded images – but at this price you can't expect all the frills. It does what it sets out to do well and simply which is more than you usually get when you go bargain hunting.

Colour me bad

Unfortunately the end result is not as impressive. The resolution of the camera is a respectable 640 by 480, more than you would expect at this price point, but the ultra low grade optics and the cheap electronics take their toll. There are two settings for image quality to allow either 16 "high grade" or 27 "standard" images to be saved on the memory card, but even at the higher grade the images are soft and indistinct in comparison to even some lower resolution cameras. Colour balance is pretty poor too, the camera suffers from the ill effects of different forms of lighting than more expensive cameras do. As a result images taken under fluorescent light undergo colour splitting to green and magenta, while under tungsten light



▲ A sample image from the Power camera

everything goes brownish.

The Power Camera system is the cheapest way you can possibly get into digital photography, and comes packed with features but when you pay this little you shouldn't expect miracles. If the image quality was great as well, I'd be sending bottled water to Power Computing for them to turn in to wine. If you can live with the image quality then you'll be very happy indeed, if you need better quality then look elsewhere – but be prepared to spend a fair bit more. ■

Andrew Koss

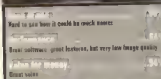
Live and Direct

The camera used by Power Computing is the VDC100 from well-known budget scanner manufacturer, Mustek. The Mustek VDC100 sports a dual aperture (f2 and f8), and a little macro lens for close up work, and a simple viewfinder. There is no flash.

Matching much more expensive cameras, the VDC100 has a composite video out, allowing it to be connected to TVs. You will need a TV with direct video input, and if it is not NTSC capable, output will be in black and white. This great feature allows your camera to double up as a simple video camera as well as displaying previews of recorded images. Output to the TV oddly seems better than the final output quality, perhaps because of the smoothing effect of the slightly blurred TV image. This is a welcome feature – it certainly livened up a dull CU Amiga planning meeting when we found it worked with our video projector.

POWER DIGITAL CAMERA Developer: Power Computing

System Requirements: OS 2.85 or better, 1 MB RAM, 640x480 + 256K or better recommended



OVERALL

Easy to use, fun and very, very cheap – but resolution don't impress

81

PD.net

Dave Stroud unleashes another great assortment of Internet PD software utilities and games.

AmiFig 3.0

Type: Structured Graphics Tool

Available from: Amnet

gib/ed3/bmf30_66t.tba

Size: 326K

Requirements: OS 3.0+

Version 3 of this excellent structured graphics tool now supports the Xfig 3.2 file protocol, multiple print windows and object alignment. Added to all the other features of this program, AmiFig continues to impress.

With all the drawing tools provided, you can create anything from simple line-drawings, through clipart, to complicated scientific diagrams. Let your imagination run wild! Oh, but this is a restricted demo version, which only saves out images composed of up to 30 objects.

For a very reasonable registration fee of US\$ 20 or DM 30, however, you can unleash this program's full potential. The sky, as they say, is the limit. Well, almost. You'll probably need quite a lot of RAM to reach the sky.

As for the versatility of this program, well, there's not nearly enough room to do it justice here, so scoot on over to the CUCD/Magazine/InternetPD drawer on CUCD23 to check it out for yourselves. ★★★★★



Soliton 1.61b

Type: Card Game

Available from: <http://www.uni-karlsruhe.de/~Kai.Nickel/soliton/soliton161b1>

ha

Size: 263K

Requirements: Kickstart 3.0+, MUI 3.6+

It's a card game. More precisely, a patience card game. Much like Klondike, only it uses MUI and adds some extra little features like statistics, a timer and a move counter. Other aesthetic touches like animated card-turning and a selectable background pattern, not to mention those which MUI can give it, means that this is a very configurable game of patience. When all's said and done, it is only a game of patience, but it's a very good one. There are plenty of options to make the game as easy or as difficult as you'd like, including that of showing a "move" button when a move is possible (and if you can't see it yourself, clicking the "move" button will get the computer to do it for you).

You can define up to ten different "profiles" – combinations of cardsets and background patterns – to flick between at will. Creating your own cardsets can be done with any paint package – Soliton imports cards from a simple brush, and supports dattypes, so you don't need to convert images to a particular format. The archive also contains some scripts for ImageFX and Personal Paint to convert other cardsets like those used by Klondike to a format recognised by Soliton.

All in all, an excellent implementation of an old idea, and it's hard to see what could be added to Soliton to make it more appealing. After all, there's only so much you can ask for from a game of patience. ★★★★★



Circuit 1.2

Type: Circuit board simulator

From: Amnet: misc@cc.circuit.lha

Size: 67k

Requirements: Kickstart 3.0+ MUI 3.0+

Written in AmigaE by Maxime Gambon, Circuit allows you to design and simulate circuit boards, and would therefore have come in very handy for my A-levels. Sorry Maxime, but you're a little late! Still, let's see what it can do.

Two windows are opened when you run Circuit for the first time, the main window and a project window, which acts as a blank canvas for designing your circuit. You do this by clicking and dragging an element in the second column of the main window to the project window. Do this with a couple of switches, a gate of your choice and a light bulb, and place them as you wish. Now all you have to do is link them up.

After reading the manual, you soon find out that this is done with the "bind" object (the first icon in the first column of the main window). Clicking this, followed by the output point of one element and the input of another wires the two elements together. Do this a couple of times, and you've got yourself a simple circuit.

I'm sure someone who would actually use this tool seriously would find it very useful – it has a lot of potential, but there's still plenty of room for improvement. The user interface could be made more intuitive, the manual could help by including an example tutorial to get you started (although there are a couple of example circuits included), and a print option would be a bonus for "debugging" your circuits on paper. ★★



SPlayer 1.9

Type: Sound Utility

From: http://www.oxford.net/~favers/files/splayer_v1.9.lha

Size: 114K

Requirements: Kickstart 3.0+, Play16 1.7+, Mpeg2 3.3+

SPlayer's main use is as a GUI frontend for Mpeg2 and Play16 (both of which are available from Aminet). It doesn't use MUI, so it doesn't have the configurability of similar utilities, but as a plus point, doesn't require as many resources for a relatively simple tool.

It can also be used from the CLI, and the documentation included in the archive contains information on how to set up SPlayer for use with Dopus, AWab and iBrowse.

Its main use, however, is as a GUI. From the point of view of configurability, it isn't very. I absolutely loathe the Topaz font (what is it with Topaz this month, is it back in fashion?), and would stake my life on not being the only one to hope for a font-sensitive GUI in a future version.

The GUI window can be toggled between Play16 and Mpeg2 modes, and controls plenty of features of both sound-playing utilities. The familiar "LCD" panel in the top left of the window is a tad on the large side, and, whilst the window isn't resizable, you can iconify it if you wish.

There are several other features of SPlayer available from the menu, like AutoLoad and AutoPlay, and it can save out files too, so if you use it to scan a drawer full of samples, you can save out only the ones you want to a different location.

I know the author doesn't want any "GadTools vs MUI" flame wars developing, but a font-sensitive GUI of some sort would be a welcome change to the current Topaz offering. Otherwise, SPlayer appears to be a very competent little utility. ****



Bloog v1.0

Type: Mailware

Available from: Aminet, game@thinkbloog.lha

Size: 324K

Despite being another "push blocks around in a certain way to finish each level" puzzler, Bloog manages to be different enough to catch your attention. Alright, so the character you control - a green blob - is far from imaginative, but the gameplay makes up for this.

At the beginning of each level, various coloured blocks are scattered about a room, amid jewels and other items. The idea isn't to push them all into one place (thank heaven) but instead, to get rid of them, because they aren't of primary importance.

You need to collect a certain number of golden keys to complete each level. Sometimes, there are already a few of these scattered around the level which you can just pick up, but what do you do when there aren't any left?

This is where it gets interesting. The blocks which you can push around the screen are coloured either red, yellow or blue. Pushing a block into another of the same colour results in both blocks disappearing and being magically replaced by a key. Very nice.

To stand in your way are such traps

as lava (which you can't normally walk over) and spikes (which you can never touch).

Other items like stars (which let you walk over lava), hearts (which act as a transportation device) and coloured squares (which change a block's colour) are there to help you, and to make things a little more tricky, the old favourite - squares you can only walk across in one direction - also make an appearance.

All these lectures are introduced to you gradually, and could make for some fiendish levels in the final game, which should be finished around the time you read this - all you have to do to get it is show your interest by emailing the author. I like Bloog, but still think it could be improved aesthetically, by getting rid of that pig-ugly Topaz font for a start.

Also, being able to quit the game and return to Workbench instantly (without having to go through the menu) would be nice. Keep up the good work, Marcus! I do look forward to seeing the final game. ****

A bit on the side

With an increase in the number of files now residing on my hard disk (not to mention the need to buy another CD rack), I'm finding it increasingly difficult to remember where all those files are. A good job, then, that version 1.13 of DirScanner was uploaded to Aminet recently ([util/w01/DirScanner113.lha](http://w01.dirscanner113.lha) - 40k). It's also nice to see confirmation that Topaz/II is, indeed, hated the world over, as the author names it as one of the reasons for using MUI to create DirScanner's font-sensitive GUI.

Continuing the cluster of MUI utilities is Address (blz/dhese/Address.lha - 60k). Like DirScanner, it does a simple job - this time of keeping track of all those names and addresses you can't be forgetting. It's not complicated, which is good, because I don't like it when things get complicated. Some user-definable fields and a configurable layout would be quite nice though.

For those of you who appreciate and take care of your RAM, another couple of memory-oriented utilities might be right up your street. First up is RadMn (disk/misc/radman.lha - 50k), which, despite sounding like a sound-bite from a cheesy sightline flick, is in fact a GUI for RAD disks. No folks, this one does not use MUI.

The other memory tool is ShowMem (util/mem/ShowMem.lha - 1k), which pops up a resizable window on the Workbench screen showing you a colour-coded representation of your memory - what sort, how much is used, and how much is free. I told you I didn't like it when things got complicated.

Finally, speculation over phase5's pre/box has already started. Witness the first guess at its appearance - pix/trce/PreBox.lha - 241k). Now, here's a little exercise: Cover up the bottom two-thirds of the picture (so you can't see the grill), get rid of the logo, imagine it's sprayed black, and tell me what you see. Anyone for a spot of housework?



PD.POST

PD.POST

For those without Internet access, here's Richard Drummond with a round-up of the latest PD available via mail order.

Impérial V2.66

Type: Puzzle game

Available from: Underground PD 54
Carmine Close, Shoburyness, Essex
SS3 9YZ Tel: 01702 236667

Price: £1.50

Impérial, by Jean-Marc Boursot, is a puzzle game based on the tiles from Mah-Jongg. The idea is to remove free pairs of tiles from the arrangement of tiles on the screen until none are left. A simple idea? Yes. But it is difficult and very addictive.

There are many similar games like this to be found but, personally Impérial is my favourite. It coaxes atmosphere with its oriental look and easy music - and it has a plethora of options to prevent it becoming a bit too repetitive.

6 different layouts, a layout editor, two player challenge mode etc.

Impérial is polished, habit-forming and Workbench-friendly. If you have an earlier version, this new version doesn't offer much more. If you don't, get a copy now (and remember it's shareware) ★★★★★

Disk
of the
Month



M215

Type: Workbench utility

Available from: KEW - II Software PO Box 672, South Croydon, Surrey CR2 9YS

Tel: 0181 657 1617 E-mail: kew-ii@netcomuk.co.uk

Price: £1.50

M215 is an applications and tools launcher for Workbench and, as such, is a contender for ToolManager 3.0's crown. Can this new blood aspire to better the long-standing champion?

M215 functions similarly to ToolManager. It creates strips or 'docks' of button gadgets on the Workbench screen which can be clicked to launch applications or scripts. Icons can be dropped on buttons to pass arguments to an application. Tool Manager's Prefs editor is more powerful and easier to use since it uses MUI, but anybody out there who dislikes MUI may prefer M215.

Where M215 really scores over ToolManager is the ability to use icons in its docks (rather than just text and/or images). This is visually appealing, especially if you have NewIcons installed. M215 does all the necessary colour remapping

for you. Its other innovative feature is the ability to dynamically create docks by scanning for files in a particular drawer. For example, you could create a dock of all your Prefs programs by simply telling M215 to scan your Prefs drawer.

Overall, this an excellent utility - but I will remain loyal to ToolManager ★★★★★



Icon Post

Type: Novelty

Available from: Available from: Classic Amiga PD, 11 Deansgate, Redcliffe, Manchester, M26 2SH Tel: 0161 723 1639

Price: £1 plus 75p P&P per order

Icon Post is, as the author Steve Tiffany claims, a creative writing toy. You supply it with a sentence structure by clicking on different grammatical terms and it produces corresponding words at random from its dictionary. A rather bizarre idea you might think and you would be right. But it does have some fun and novelty value.

The interface is rather clunky and non-standard, being written in AMOS, but it is functional and provides all the usual text editing controls. It also allows you to import and export ASCII files so that you can use Icon Post to add some 'creativity' to external and more staid documents.

This program does not have much practical use, but perhaps it may help to inspire authors suffering from the dreaded writers block? Who knows? Anyway, it is cleverly written and may provide half-an-hour's amusing diversion ★★★★★



Collector 2.1

Type: Graphics utility

Available from: KEW=Il Software, PO Box 672 South Croydon Surrey CR2 9YS
Tel: 0161 657 1617

Price: £1.50

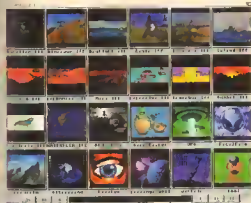
ector is a utility for creating thumbnail sizes of your image collections. In this respect it does a similar job to commercial products such as Picture Manager Pro (at £40 pounds cheaper OK - it has image processing or conversion facilities but as 'CreationWare' if you like it, send the author something you have created yourself) it is impressive.

You may have seen an earlier version of this program and, if you have, then this version is still well worth a look. The author, Frédéric Calandini, has completely rewritten the program in C (from AMOS).

It is now faster and more system-friendly and requires an AGA Amiga with Workbench 3.0+.

The program features a simple GUI with keyboard short-cuts and has many features and options to make the task of graphics cataloguing easier. It supports the creation of thumbnails in 16 or 256 colour grey-scale or 256 colours, the automatic scanning of directories, XPK compression, the creation of multi volume indexes and the saving of the indexes as IFF files. The only glaring omission is that it has no ARexx port.

Collector is no competition for its commercial counterparts, but does its job cheaply and well. There are newer versions of this program available, for example, on the Amnet, but this version is still very usable. Perhaps if you speak nicely to KEW=Il Software they will supply you with the latest version. ★★



Telly Chubbies, Armchair Assassin AGA

Type: Game

Available from: Classic Amiga PD, 11 Deansgate, Radcliffe, Manchester, M26 2SH
Tel: 0161 723 1638

Price: £1 plus 75p P&P per order

The documentation for this game states "The object of the game is to blast the stuffing out of as many of those EVIL TV Chubbies (tm) as your mouse hand can cope with." That says it all really.

This is an absurdly simple and pointless game. You control a cross-hair sight with the mouse and have to zap all the tiny 'Chubbies' that are running about the screen. You do get a choice of weapon: shotgun, mini-gun or photon torpedo. But that's about it.

It would have been nice to have

had this game before Christmas - it would have been the perfect relief from all the media frenzy about those pathetic TV Chubbies. However, as a game, it does not offer much. If you need five minutes worth of gratuitous violence, give it a go. ★★



Class HD Utils #30

Type: Utilities collection

Available from: Classic Amiga PD, 11 Deansgate, Radcliffe, Manchester, M26 2SH
Tel: 0161 723 1638

Price: £1 plus 75p P&P per order

This is the 30th incarnation in this utility series and contains the same mixture of useful and novel software as its predecessors.

AllSystemsGo, which plays a sample of HAL 9000 from the film 2001 saving 'All my systems are operational' is intended to go into your W8StartUp drawer. This, perhaps, does not come under the headings useful or utility, but nevertheless has some amusement value - at least for the first two or three times.

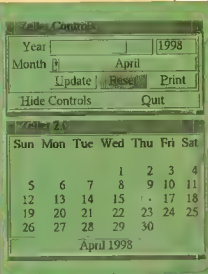
Keyboarder is a game to help you polish your typing skills. It consists simply of letters falling down the screen - which you must type as quickly as possible.

There are many similar programs to be found with more features but this is quite a nice version.

Zeller is a perpetual calendar program based on the Zeller's Congruence algorithm. It can display a calendar of any month between the years AD1753 and AD2100. I'm not convinced that anybody will actually find a use for this, but at least this is one piece of software that will still be functioning in the next century.

There are a few other interesting odds and ends on this disk. For example, UnZip, a GUI for zip decompression, ADInley for creating plays for audio cassettes, a PhotoCD datatype and a font catalogue for the FinalWriter word processor.

Nothing on this disk is a 'must-have' but there is a wide selection of software here. For £1 this has to be good value for money. ★★



Art Gallery

Are you a Digital Dali? Computer Carravaggio? Send your pics to:
Art Gallery, CU Amiga, 37-39 Mill Harbour, Isle of Dogs, London E14 9TZ.



See your work in print... and win a print, too!

Each month we will declare one picture in the Gallery to be picture of the month – and if it is yours, we will send you a print of your work, output to an ultra high quality IRIS printer on glossy paper (that's around 26-30 quid

from a print shop to you, gaw!) – you'll never see your work look so good! If you want to enter a picture into Art Gallery, either email it to artgal@cu-amiga.co.uk or post it on disk to our postal address, marking the envelope Art

Gallery. We recommend the use of PNG format as it saves a lot of disk space, but alternatively GIF or IFF are fine.

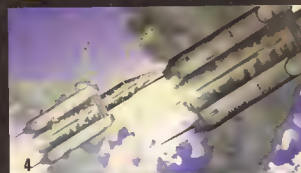
★ 'Jpeg' drops image quality so avoid where possible – also never use for images with 256 or fewer colours.



1. Train View by Auburn Thomas Hodgson
This piece was rendered in Cinema 4D, based on a sketch Auburn did on a train. The landscape through the window was photographed through a train window. The acid colours, as anyone who remembers Auburn's picture of a Beetle some months back will recall, are his/her (sorry, unless named) trademark. Reminds me of a journey through pollution stained Hungarian countryside a few years back. Dramatic, well composed, excellent colour sense. Send us more!



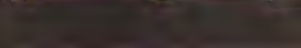
2. Dangerous Liaisons by Steve Dukes
Steve's first render in Imagine. The models are from the Amine, uploaded by Andrew Nun, but the idea is what makes it worthwhile. Steve says he is a fan of the "impossibly stupid Deleks" as well as dinosaurs, and thought the two would go well together. A great evocation of childhood obsessions - I certainly remember playground debates on whether Giant Haystacks could beat Judge Dredd or if Dracula could last three rounds with James Bond.



3. Last Man Standing by Cedric Moorhead
This pic was sent to me by Cedric, who makes it clear in his letter he is an opinionated bastard. "I whipped this up in no time," he says, "because everything in your art gallery is no (expletive deleted) that I only needed 20 minutes to do better." He says he used to like the gallery but reckons that these days it is "full of (expletive deleted) doing a bunch of (expletive deleted) on DPaint 2 they got with their A500." Cocky git, huh? He goes on to say that he did this picture in Art Effect ("great, but buggy as (expletive deleted)") and Image FX ("the dog's testicles"), and reckons he's going to use Art Gallery to get his work printed on an IRIS once a month. Yeah, right. So what do you lot think - is he right, or is he just a little (expletive deleted)?



4. White Skin by Auburn Thomas Hodgson
Auburn gets two pics in this month by dint of supplying two very good ones. This one has scanned clouds and textures generated in Dpaint and Photogenica. The latter was used for the motion blur and the HUD overlay, too. The subject matter is a pretty clichéd one, but the execution is original, in your face and very dynamic.



5. Spiced by Raymond Zachariasse
Raymond, you are a sick man. A solid piece of DPaint draughtsmanship demonstrating a real skill with the mouse and a real lack of masochistic taste. The likenesses are of variable quality (Baby Spice looks scarier than Scary) but Spiced certainly earns a place in the Gallery on the basis that I can't resist skillfully hand drawn pieces.

User Groups

Let our international user-group directory put you in contact with other amateur users in your local area.

To add a new group to the list, just fill in the form on the opposite page.

Amiga Christchurch Inc
Location: Christchurch New Zealand
Contact: Annalisa Lorenato
Telephone: +64 03 3380232
Meeting times: Second Tuesday of every month 7:30 pm
Places: Shirley Community Centre, Shirley Rd
Address: AQ PO Box 35-107, Christchurch NZ

Amigaclub
Location: World Wide - An Amateur Radio Amiga Group
Contact: Paul Carson
Email: D.Kus@carson.demon.net
Telephone: N/A
Meeting times: TBA
Places: On the Amateur Radio Puncta Network
Address: 10 Belgrave Avenue, Birrington, Colchester, N Ireland
BT19 6XA

Wassalids
Location: Belgium
Contact: Terry Mees
Email: wassalids@glo.be
Telephone: +32 (0)3744 1319
WWW: <http://tfran.glo.be/~wassalid>
Meeting times: 12 meetings on 'weekend' Fridays. We have 6 Amiga clubs in Belgium: Antwerpen, Merksem, Aalst, Mechelen, Turnhout, St Niklaas
Address: Lepelstraat 11, 9140 Steendorp Belgium

Wigan/West Lanes Amiga User Group
Location: Wigan/W Lancashire
Contact: Simon Brown/Reish Twiss
Email: sasmig@wigan.co.uk
Telephone: Simon, 01257 402201 or Ralph, 01896 623885
WWW: www.warp.co.uk/~ssamig
Meeting Places: St Thomas the Martyr School Hall, Highgate Road, Up Holland, Lancs
Address: 79 Woodcock Road, Appleby Bridge Wigan, WN6 9JR 6
32 Higher Lane, Up Holland, West Lanes

Alpha Software
Location: Newcastle UK
Contact: Gerard Murfin
Email: garym@globalnet.co.uk
Telephone: 01673 751544
WWW: <http://www.users.globalnet.co.uk/~gary/>
Meeting times: 8pm - 9pm
Places: IRC #AMIRC GalaxyNet
Address: Alpha Software, Garth Murfin 113, Calverton Way, Collingwood, Grange, Cramlington
Northumberland, NE23 8EZ UK

Convergence International
Location: International
Contact: Ben Clarke
Email: enclume@convergence.eu.org
Telephone: 0950 565559
WWW: www.convergence.eu.org
Meeting times: 8pm (GMT) Wednesdays and Sundays
Places: #convergence (IRCnet)
Address: 49 St Albans Road, Linc, United Kingdom

Amiga Club Gink (ACG)
Location: Gink, Belgium
Contact: Ben Vanhoose
Email: amigaclubgink@skynet.be
WWW: <http://jules.stylen.be/amigagink>
Meeting times: every 1st Sunday of month
Places: Cultural Centre of Gink, meeting room 1
Address: Weg Naer Zwanberg 248
B-3600 OPGLABEEK, BELGIUM

Italex ETC
Location: Poland
Contact: Shandor
Email: shandor1@pobox.com
Telephone: +4881 357184
Meeting times: TBA
Places: unspecified
Address: ul. Marynowska 1/27
71004 Szczecin 10, Poland

National Capital Amiga User Group
Location: Washington D.C. USA
Contact: Fabian Jimenez
Contact by: Phone (please send us your phone number, Fabian)
Telephone: 301/824-0760 (10pm - 1am EST)
Meeting times: 12:00 noon EST
Places: Dolly Madison Library
Address: Fabian Jimenez, NCAUG
PO Box 12360, Arlington, VA 22209 USA

Amiga Maine Special Interest Group
Location: Athens, Greece
Contact: Maria Melakou
Telephone: 301 902991/9991/2019
WWW: <http://www.computink.gr/amiga>
Meeting times: 5pm Saturdays Places: Athens
Address: Mens Melakou, Gliniatou 11/9 17234 Dafni Athens, Greece

Amiga Forever!
Location: Hampshire
Contact: Stuart Kersh
Telephone: 01703 861842 all day
Meeting times/places: TBA
Address: 101 Ewell Way, Totter, Southampton, Hants SO40 3PD

Mutual Amiga Computer Enthusiast
Location: Beresford, New South Wales, Australia
Contact: Ken Woodward
Email: ken@bncb.com.au
Telephone: after working hours
Meeting times: 7pm, 1st & 3rd Wednesdays of month
Places: Beresford Bowling Club
Address: 58 Corbett Avenue, New Lismore, New South Wales, Australia

Kleikat: Surrey Amiga User Group
Location: Surrey
Contact: Rob Gilbert
Email: glibro@amika.surrey.net
Telephone: 01832 676336
WWW: www.amika.surrey.net
Meeting times: Monthly (TBA)
Places: Vaux
Address: 19 Hax Road, Overbury, Surrey KT16 0JL

Canberra Amiga Users Society Inc
Location: Canberra, ACT, Australia
Contact: Alex Cameron (Secretary)
Telephone: 021 5266 2885

WWW
http://www.sprynet.au/~jamesg/CAUS/
Meeting times: 2nd Thursday of the month from 8pm
Places: Wodan Town Centre Library
Address: Canberra Amiga Users Society
PO Box 596, Canberra ACT, 2601
Australia

XCAD User
Location: N Ireland
Contact: Tony McGarrard
Telephone: 01652 250320 (after 6pm)
Meeting times/places: TBA
Address: 11 Lanyon Drive, Omagh, Co Tyrone BT78 5JH

ICPUG SE Computer Club
Location: Birgini Hill, Kent
Contact: Len Bland
Telephone: 01859 813 616
Meeting times: Thursdays 8-10pm
Places: Birgini Hill (phone for details)
Address: 56 Rookley Rd, Orpington Kent, SE8 4JH

Colchester Amiga Forum
Location: Colchester Essex
Contact: Patrick Meehan
Telephone: 01206 212 864 (Mon-Fri)
Email: pme@colnet.com
Meeting times/places: TBA
Address: 9 Windmill Ct, Colford Colchester Essex CO6 1LH

Luton Amiga Users Group
Location: Luton Beds
Contact: Dave Nodde
Telephone: 01582 750 638
Meeting times/places: Monthly TBA

Deal Amiga Club
Location: Deal Kent
Contact: John Worthington
Telephone: 01324 367 992
Meeting times: 7pm Fridays
Places: St John Ambulance Hall, Mill Hill, Deal, Kent
Address: 100 Trinity Place, Deal, Kent

Amiga Service
Location: Chislehurst, Kent
Contact: Noel Reginald
Telephone: 03371 458 244 (8am-6pm)
Meeting times/places: TBA
Address: Rue Du Nord 89 6180 Couques, Belgium

Extreme Codefs
Location: Sheffield
Contact: Mark Johnston
Telephone: N/A
Meeting times/Places: Contact for details
Address: 1st Floor, 145 Upperthorpe Rd Upperthorpe, Sheffield, S3 3EB

Stoke Amiga User Group
Location: Stoke on Trent, Staffs
Contact: Paul Shalley
Telephone: 01782 603 219
Meeting times: 7:30pm Wednesdays
Places: Jesler Public House, Biddup Rd Hayes, Stoke on Trent, Staffs ST6 6TG

Amiga Falcons
Location: Malmo Sweden
Contact: Carl-Johan Rudner
Telephone: +46 40 932212
WWW: <http://www.iglobal.se/~moran/amiga>
Address: Amiga Falcons c/o Carl-Johan Rudner, Vebadrottsgatan 8, SE 212 26 Malmö SWEDEN

Finnish Amiga Users Group
Location: Finland
Contact: Jarmo Sironi
WWW: <http://ibeamer.ytel.fi/~sakur>
Address: Jarmo Sironi
Oravamäentie 2 F 17
02760 Espoo FINLAND

Amiga Computer Enthusiasts of Elkhart, Indiana
Location: Northern Indiana, USA
Contact: Gregory Dinnis
Telephone: 219/876-8533 (after 6pm)
WWW: www.cyberlink.com/~gdninnis/face.htm
Meeting times: Second Saturday of the month
Place: 26728 Hampton Woods Dr., Elkhart, IN 46514
Address: 60300 Farnbrook Lane, Elkhart, IN 46517 INET, USA

Photogenics is ImageFX Users
Location: Stamford Le-Hoppe Essex
Contact: Spencer
Telephone: 01376 348414 (9am-6pm)
WWW: <http://www.ukonline.co.uk/~spencer/private.htm>
Meeting times/places: TBA
Address: 44 Brampton Rise, Cornthorpe, Stamford Le-Hoppe, Essex SS17 7NR

No Specific Name
Location: Greenford Community Centre, London
Contact: Richard Chapman
Telephone: 0181 999 9599 8pm-8pm
Meeting times: all day at weekends
Meeting times: 7pm 10pm Thurs
Place: Greenford Community Centre
Address: 96 Mendwale Road, Ealing, London W5 1NR

AmigaTech Amiga Users Group
Location: Dayton Ohio, Ohio USA
Contact: John Hengstenberg
Telephone: 0317667-9541 After 6pm EST
WWW: www.nortepc.com/AmigaTech.htm
Meeting time: 3rd Saturday of the month - 1-3pm
Places: Huber Heights Library
Address: AmigaTech, PO Box 292854, Kettering, OH 45429-0854

South West Amiga Group
Location: South West England
Contact: Andy Mills
Telephone: 01726 830703
(7-10:30pm weekdays anytime week-ends (within reason))
WWW: <http://www.southwestamiga.com>
Meeting Times/Places: TBA (likely to be Bristol/Bath area)
Other: Please contact for further details
Address: 51 Woodville Gardens, Whitchurch, Bristol BS14 9NF

Wagah Lakes Computers Users Group
 Location: Central Coast NSW Australia
 Contact: Darrell Karnan
 Meeting Times: 1st & 3rd Thursday of
 every Month
 Address: Berkeley Vale Public School
 Phone: 065 555 555
 Address: PO Box 859 Tootyally NSW
 2252

Wagah Lakes Computers Users

Association Inc
 Location: Hobart Australia
 Contact: Eric Riksch
 Phone: (018) 120 787
 Meeting times: 7:30-9:30pm 3rd
 Tuesday of the month
 Address: Contact for address
 Address: GPO Box 673 Hobart GPO
 7000

Wagah Lakes Computers Users

Users Group
 Location: Tacoma Washington USA
 Contact: Jim McFarland
 Phone: (253) 285-3478 evenings
 WWW: <http://www.wrlm.com/~red>
 Meeting times: 4th Thursday evening of
 each month
 Address: Firefest Community Center
 Tacoma WA
 Address: PO Box 11191, Tacoma WA
 98411-0191 USA

Wagah Lakes Computers Users

Wagah Lakes Computers Users
 Location: Alkmaar the Netherlands
 Contact: Roland de Herder
 Telephone: Wanna call international? Ask
 for my number
 WWW: <http://www.cyberstorm.nl/~micron/havo>
 Meeting times: 12 18h30 a year
 Address: 18 de Herder Eindhoven 35
 652 GM Heflo, The Netherlands

Wagah Lakes Computers Users

Virus Help Team - Norway
 Location: Norway
 Contact: Helge Syr
 Telephone: +47501 75678
 WWW: <http://www.ssi.no/~syre>
 Address: Ronyviken 40
 N-4260 SKUDENSHAVN

Wagah Lakes Computers Users

Wagah Lakes Computers Users
 Location: West Midlands
 Contact: Luke Stowe
 Telephone: 0966 467856 (after 10pm)
 WWW: None yet
 Meeting Times: 8pm-11pm
 Address: Eardon Methodist Church
 Address: 9 Trossach Rd,

Wagah Lakes Computers Users
 Location: Mount Nev Coventry
 CWS 78J

Wagah Lakes Computers Users

Wagah Lakes Computers Users
 Location: Istanbul
 Contact: Gynoc Kaplan
 Telephone: 0300216320981
 WWW: <http://www.medvocal.com>
 Meeting times: Two a month
 Address: Anadoluhisari sok No 1 Huzar apt
 d 2 81 080 Gortepo-Istanbul
 Turkey

Wagah Lakes Computers Users

Wagah Lakes Computers Users
 Location: Brisbane Australia
 Contact: Rony Blake
 Telephone: 07183281790
 WWW:
 NTP: <http://www.powerup.com.au/~rastlin>
 Meeting times: 1st Tues of month 7-
 8pm & 2nd Sun of month 12pm to 4pm
 Address: St Lawrence's College
 82 Stephano Rd S Brisbane Qld
 Address: 3 Cornbie Court, Eagleby Gold
 Coast, Queensland 4207 Austl

Wagah Lakes Computers Users

Wagah Lakes Computers Users
 Location: Irvine, Ayrshire Scotland
 Contact: Marland or Dale
 Telephone: 01292 287958 or 01294
 275535
 Meeting times: Wednesdays
 Address: Annick Community Centre
 Irvine
 Address: 49 Belmont Road Ayr
 Scotland KA7 2PE

Wagah Lakes Computers Users

Wagah Lakes Computers Users
 Location: West London
 Contact: Alan Penlar
 Telephone: 0181 932 1856
 Meeting times: 1st and 3rd Tues of month
 Address: Duke Of York Public House
 Address: 19 Hatfield Tower Park Rd East
 Acton London W3 8TZ

Wagah Lakes Computers Users

Wagah Lakes Computers Users
 Location: Dublin Ireland
 Contact: Edna McGinnis
 Telephone: +353-01-4235903
 WWW:
<http://www.noland.amiga.org/helpline.htm>
 Meeting times: Anytime (24 hrs)
 Address: 27 St Finians Green Lucan, Co
 Dublin, Eire

Wagah Lakes Computers Users

Wagah Lakes Computers Users
 Location: Little Rock Arkansas
 Contact: Tim Grooms
 Telephone: 501-461 7418

Wagah Lakes Computers Users
 WWW: <http://www.concentric.net/~as>
 up.htm
 Meeting Times/Places: Monthly TBA
 Address: 14 Hickory Lane Macmillan AR
 72113 USA

Wagah Lakes Computers Users

Wagah Lakes Computers Users
 Location: Dorset UK
 Contact: Oz
 Telephone: 01202 879158 (10:30pm-8am
 GMT)
 Address: 50 Junction Rd Hemworthy
 Poole, Dorset (Isle of NBI UK)

Wagah Lakes Computers Users

Wagah Lakes Computers Users
 Location: Perth, Western Australia
 Contact: Arthur Roland
 Telephone: 08 9354 1717
 Meeting times: 2nd Tues of month at
 7pm
 Address: Curtin University
 Address: 31 Chiffrin St Morley
 Western Australia 6062

Wagah Lakes Computers Users

Wagah Lakes Computers Users
 Location: Umeå, Sweden
 Contact: Martin Salen
 Telephone: +46(0)90 2481 6 (24 hrs)
 WWW: <http://www.amiga-cg.se>
 Meeting times: Tuesdays 19:00
 Address: Kalle Sinton, Umeå
 Address: Skolgatan 14 SE-903 22 UMEÅ
 Sweden

Wagah Lakes Computers Users

Wagah Lakes Computers Users
 Location: Huddersfield W Yorks
 Contact: Geoff Milnes
 Telephone: 01484 643534
 WWW: <http://www.geoffmilnes.com.uk>
 Meeting times: 7:30pm onwards
 Address: Places Commercial Inn Market
 St Paddock Huddersfield
 Address: 8 Ochrewell Avenue
 Deeping, Huddersfield, W Yorks

Wagah Lakes Computers Users

Wagah Lakes Computers Users
 Location: Highland Scotland
 Contact: Tommy McDonald
 Telephone: 01867 404757 Anytime
 WWW: <http://ikona.prohosting.com>
 Meeting times/Places: TBA
 Address: 7 County Gallies Piperhill
 WAIN Scotland FK12 5SE

Wagah Lakes Computers Users

Wagah Lakes Computers Users
 Location: Northern Ireland
 Contact: Charles Blair or Chris
 McGonagle
 Telephone: 01504 864700
 WWW:
<http://www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/Park/7401>
 Meeting Times/Places: TBA
 Address: 77 St Columas Drive
 Strabane, Co Tyrone N Ireland

Wagah Lakes Computers Users

Wagah Lakes Computers Users
 Location: Worldwide
 Contact: Gary Peake
 Telephone: 1 281 350 2194
 WWW:
<http://www.wano.net/~gpeake/links.html>
 Meeting times: Daily
 Address: All Nets and IRC
 Address: 18723 Teller Blvd
 Spring Texas USA 77388

Wagah Lakes Computers Users

Wagah Lakes Computers Users
 Location: Galesburg IL USA
 Contact: Mitch Durdle
 WWW: <http://www.galesburg.net/~kcc>
 Meeting times:
 First Tuesday of Month 7pm
 Places: 686 N Kelliog Galesburg, IL
 (In the auditorium)
 Address: Knox Computer Club
 1003 East Fifth Ave
 Monmouth IL 61482
 USA

Wagah Lakes Computers Users

Wagah Lakes Computers Users
 Location: Columbus Missouri
 Contact: Terry Boehr
 Telephone: (678) 817 2548
 WWW: <http://www.comma.com>
 Meeting times: 7pm 2nd Tues of month
 Places: TSA
 Address: 115 West Phyllis Avenue
 Comma MO 65202
 USA

Wagah Lakes Computers Users

Wagah Lakes Computers Users
 Location: Campbelltown, Sydney, Australia
 Contact: Mark Vine
 Telephone: 02(4631)1801 After 7pm
 WWW: None yet
 Meeting times: 7pm-10pm 2nd & 4th
 of every month
 Address: Arara Community Centre
 Riverside Dr Arara
 Address: 11 Kennedy Grove,
 Appin NSW
 Appin 2560

Wagah Lakes Computers Users

Wagah Lakes Computers Users
 Location: Lelystad the Netherlands
 Contact: J. Yong Daphus
 Telephone: +31(0)320 241741 (not after
 23:00 CET)
 WWW:
<http://www.nicolas.nl/amiga/amiga.html>
 Meeting times: Every month 19:30 till
 23:00
 Address: Buurthuis de Kruisweg (same as
 the postal address)
 Address: Computer Club Akriel
 p/a Buurthuis de Kruisweg
 Post 156
 8224 DU
 Lelystad The Netherlands

Send this form to: User Groups; CU Amiga, 37-39 Millharbour, Isle of Dogs, London, E14 9TZ.

Alternatively, fax it to: 0171 972 6755, or use the online version of the form which can be accessed from our website at: www.cu.amiga.co.uk This service is completely free of charge.

General Location: _____

Tel: _____

Postal Address: _____

Meeting Times/Places: _____

Group name: _____

Email: _____

Web site: _____

Contact name: _____

Preferred contact method (please tick)

E-mail ☐ Phone ☐ Post ☐





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Amiga Workshop

Personal Paint

Bored with static images? In our final PPaint tutorial John Kennedy explains how to get the most from its powerful animation features.



▲ From the Storyboard, you can see an overview of your animation and select individual frames.

An animation is a collection of images, shown in quick succession one after the other. The end result is something which looks like movement: it could be a cartoon, a moving diagram, some bouncing text or even a video clip.

The Amiga has always been good at animation, and Personal Paint is one of the best tools for creating and editing these "anim" files, as they are known.

Making an animation with Personal Paint

Before you start your animation, it pays to spend some time deciding on the screen mode you want to use. Although Personal Paint can

alter the mode after you have created some frames, it can be a lot simpler to settle on a suitable mode before you start. Although in an ideal world you would use as many colours as possible, you need to remember that most colours take up more memory - it's up to you to strike a balance.

It's almost impossible to predict how much memory a given animation will consume. As each frame is stored in terms of the differences between it and the previous frame, the size of the file will vary tremendously. If you are trying to make an animation using captured video clips for example, the file will be large. On the other hand, if you are

creating a hand-drawn cartoon which has a lot of static detail (such as a non-moving backdrop) then the files can be small.

Creating an animation is easy simply start with the first frame as you would with any ordinary picture. Then add more frames using the options in the Animation menu. You can then move to the new frame, make changes, move back to the original and so on. When you're happy, select Play from the menu and watch as the frames are displayed one after the other.

The large number of drawing tools and effects made available by Personal Paint means it is possible to draw very professional-looking car-

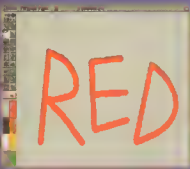
toons: you only need to look at the work of Eric Schwartz for example, and his Amy the Squirrel animations. Incidentally you can find a huge collection of Eric's work on the Personal Suite CD-ROM from Personal Paint programmers Cloanto.

Storyboard window

The key to managing animations with Personal Paint is the Storyboard window. This can be accessed from the Animation menu. It brings up a display which lists all the current frames in existence, along with their timing details. You can also right-click and drag to resize the windows which are used to represent the individual frames in the animation, and

Colour animation

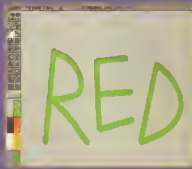
Another useful animation trick is to alter the colours. Personal Paint can store 4 separate pictures per frame, which means you can rearrange all the colours you need at any time. Not only does this mean you can see how colours evolve (and so save inquiry until speed-up play/back) but you can perform various tricks.



▲ Personal Paint can store 4 separate pictures per frame, which means you can rearrange all the colours you need at any time.



▲ Personal Paint can store 4 separate pictures per frame, which means you can rearrange all the colours you need at any time.



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▲ Personal Paint can store 4 separate pictures per frame, which means you can rearrange all the colours you need at any time.

Scala

Don't forget that you should also have an excellent multimedia tool at your disposal for combining your animations with text, wipes, sound effects and even CD quality music. Yes, Scala and Personal Paint are a brilliant combination. Create your animations in Personal Paint, and then link them together in Scala for the final touch. Scala can replay animations direct from disk (if you don't have enough memory) and lay text on top. Why limit yourself to just one piece of software?



▲ Combine two great CD Animate gateways: Scala and Personal Paint. You've never had it so good!

so fit more frames into the window or see more detail in each.

From the Storyboard window you can add or delete frames and control the display time for each one. The fraction of 60th displayed in the top right of the window will define how long in seconds the current frame will appear on the screen.

Top animation tips

Use the ARexx features. Personal Paint can split an animation into individual frames, and recombine the frames into a single animation file. Use this to create files

which are extra large, or to combine animations from different sources such as a 3D program.

Use image processing. The same Personal Paint ARexx scripts can process frame after frame automatically. You could use this approach to blur background frames, or change colours without re-drawing the entire animation.

Use as few colours as possible without compromising your anims. When images are moving, you can afford to skimp on details. Stick to a few colours, and as a result you can have longer and faster animations.

Timing is everything and Personal Paint allows individual timing per frame. Don't create fifty identical frames, create one frame which stays on-screen fifty times longer.

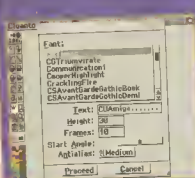
Use Optimise. If you have a favourite animation try loading it into Personal Paint and selection the Optimise option from the Animation menu. This will look through the file, detecting identical frames and replacing them with a single frame and suitable timing information. This can shrink the size of anim files created with other programs considerably – very useful.

Animation Hotkeys

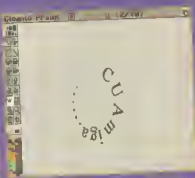
- 1 Previous frame
 - 2 Next frame
 - 3 Go to a specific frame
 - 4 Play once
 - 5 Play continuously
 - 6 Play first in forward direction, then backwards
- Alt 1 Animation preview frame
Alt 2 Animation next frame
Alt 0 Animation settings

Animbrushes

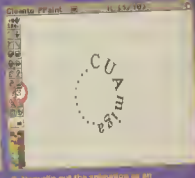
Animbrushes are a combination of the standard cut-and-paste brushes which you've probably already seen many times, and sometimes lots. Think of an AnimBrush as a brush which can store many different patterns. AnimBrushes can be any size, but typically they are clipped from an existing animation, and so are usually smaller than full-screen. These multiple brushes are most useful when you want to paste something which moves into an existing animation. Here's an example.



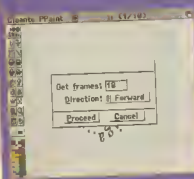
1. Starting with a stamp program, use the Alias tool to select the Circular Text option. Set the number of frames to 10, and this will automatically add frames as they are needed.



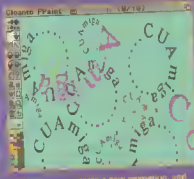
2. Define a small circle, and let the Alias script do its thing. If you have a reasonably fast Amiga, make sure Anti-alias is switched on for best results.



3. Now clip out the animation as an AnimBrush. Make sure you are at frame 1, and then click on the brush setting tool until it changes to the image shown. Drag it around the existing text as tightly as possible.



4. You'll be asked how many frames and in which direction should the brush be cut. The default values will do fine, so hit OK and the AnimBrush will be made. Now save it from the AnimBrush/AnimBrush menu option.



5. Now you can create a new animation, and stamp the AnimBrush down wherever you like. Each time you stamp the brush, it will move to the next alias. By clicking and pressing 2 to move to the next frame, you can create your new animation very quickly.

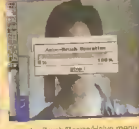
AnimBrushes are very flexible, and you can quickly build-up a library of your favourites. Use them to create animated logos for example, or star twinkla patterns. Their transparent backgrounds make them ideal for adding to existing images. Personal Paint can alter AnimBrushes like ordinary brushes, so don't be afraid to try halving and doubling them in size.



Here's how to take an ordinary full-screen animation and shrink it to a fraction of its original size. First of all, load the animation as normal.



Now capture the animation as an AnimBrush as before. This time drag out the outline to cover the entire screen.



Use the Brush/Resize/Save menu option. This process can take some time, depending on the number of frames, speed of your Amiga and so on.

Now create a new animation, and cut and paste the smaller AnimBrush over the screen. Use A1 and A2 to make sure each instance of the AnimBrush animation starts playing at a different frame. The result is a great pop video effect.

Amiga C Programming

PART 11

As the summer draws nearer we get out the duster, give our code a little spring clean and add a touch of user-friendliness.

This month we're going to look at some of the more tedious chores that need to be done to increase the usability of our program. A lot of these enhancements are obvious (and easy to implement), while some may require labourious running and testing our program before their need becomes apparent. And sometimes bad features show up only when other people run your code (hopefully, as beta testers!)

(Easy) Requesters

The most obviously unfriendly thing is the way that the "Quit" menu item causes the program to terminate immediately. The user isn't given a second chance and their (potential) work of art is lost forever.

So the first part in our improvement plan is to guard this action with a confirmation requester. The first example on the disks, "req0", adds the small piece of code needed to do this.

Requester

A requester is a transient (short-lived) window that presents information to the user, and maybe enables the user to make a small choice to affect the following activity.

Two examples are the "About" requester (an item on the "Project" menu of Workbench and many other programs) and an ASL file requester (as used in our program for loading and saving images).

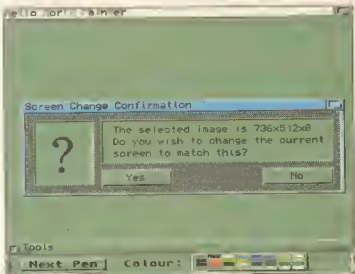
to the "case" for the "Quit" item in "idompc.c" (see Example 1).

Take care to notice the use of "{ }" to introduce a new scope for the declaration of "myreq". This localises the variable to the small bit of code (the individual "case") that uses it.

Easy Requesters (from the Intuition library) are a nice, simple mechanism for getting choices from the user. At the simplest level, all that's needed is a filled-in "struct EasyStruct".

In the example, the interesting parts are the three strings: the requester title, the message to the user, and the button titles. The latter is specified as a single string with the individual button texts separated by a "|" character. The example "Yes|No" describes two button titles, so the requester will have two buttons: "Yes" and "No".

The "EasyRequest()" function uses this information and pops up the requester on the screen associated with the specified window ("drawwin" in the example). The result of this call is a number indicating which button was chosen: zero for the right-hand button ("No") and one for



▲ Confirming a screen change

the left-hand ("Yes"). (And any extra buttons in the middle are numbered from the left starting at two.)

The body of the "if" will be executed only if a non-zero result is returned by "EasyRequest()". So the final effect is that the original

final "Quit" code will be run only if the user chooses "Yes" on the requester. If "No" is chosen then the "Quit" action is essentially ignored.

Of course, in our efforts to add user-friendliness through requesters, we need to be careful

Example 1

```
case 5 /* Quit (item 4 is the best) */
{
    struct EasyStruct myreq = { sizeof(struct EasyStruct),
                                0,
                                'Ext Confirmation',
                                "Do you really wish to quit?",
                                "Yes|No" };
    if(EasyRequest(drawwin, &myreq, NULL))
        return FALSE;
}
break;
```


User-friendly

A program is regarded as user-friendly if it works in an obvious and intuitive way and does not perform destructive things without the user's express consent.

Stage one in becoming user-friendly is to eliminate bugs that cause crashes or loss of information. Later stages may be concerned with improving the user interface. The principal goal is ease of use.

Not to require user interaction when ARexx commands are being run. For this reason, pretty much all the changes this month are made to the main IDCMP message handling code.

Modification

Even with our first step forward here's still scope for more friendliness: the user doesn't always want to be bothered by having to restate their desire to end the program, especially if they haven't used it all.

What we need is some way of noticing that the user has actually done something. For our program, this is probably whether they've modified the image.

To be accurate (and friendly), we need to remember when the image is different from something trivial (like a blank canvas) or something on disk. The second example on the disks ("req1") sprinkles code through "drawwin.c", "idcomp.c" and "loadsave.c" to create and maintain a "modified" flag, via a "setModified()" function.

The "if" part of the snippet in Example 1 has been updated to that shown in Example 2, so that the quit confirmation is not forced on the user if the program thinks the image has not been modified.

Notice that the 'short-cut' nature of the "if" statement is being used here to simplify the code (as we've seen before). If "isModified()" returns "FALSE" then the "EasyRequest()" part of the statement is not executed (so the requester does not appear).

The place where the image is

modified is the code associated with the "IDCMP_MOUSEMOVE" message and the ARexx "DRAW" message. These both set the modification flag to "TRUE".

More interestingly, there are places which cause the image to no longer be considered modified. These are the erase/clear function ("new") and the loading and saving of an image.

The fractal drawing is more problematic. Whether it's considered to modify the image is fairly arbitrary, since its effect is easily reproducible. (For the supplied examples we've chosen for it not to change the modification state.)

Another couple of changes in the "req1" example are additional confirmation requests. The code "Load" and "New" menu items have been augmented in the same way as the "Quit" item. In fact, the code is so similar it might be wise to factor out the commonality into some auxiliary function in the same kind of way as we've done before.

So, we've introduced some useful safeguards in program Simple slips in menu selection no longer throw all the user's work away, and that's got to be a big improvement. But there's still more things that can be done.

About Versions

Every program ought to have some kind of information box where the user can see vital statistics, like the program's name, version number, author and maybe some

Beta test

Usually the final stage in a program's development. 'Beta testers' are trusted or otherwise significant users who will run the program in its intended way, trying to locate problems, misfeatures and bugs in both the code and its documentation.

The term 'alpha test' is sometimes used to describe an earlier stage in a program's life, when the program is being tested by the developers or other internal people.

Example 2

```
/* If the image isn't modified we don't need to ask
if(isModified()) { EasyRequest(drawwin, &myreq, NULL);
return FALSE
```

Example 3

```
case 5 /* About (item 4 is the best) */
{
    struct EasyStruct myreq = { sizeof(struct EasyStruct),
                                0,
                                "About",
                                "HelloPainter v1.1 Zvt",
                                "Brought to you by CU Amiga",
                                "OK" };
    EasyRequest(drawwin, &myreq, NULL);
}
break;
```

Example 4

```
#define PROGRAM "HelloPainter"
#define VERSION "1.1.3"

static UBYTE *VersionString = "05VER " PROGRAM " " VERSION;
```

Example 5

```
struct Window* win = getDrawWin();
/* Try to adjust the screen to fit */
if(bmhd)
{
    struct EasyStruct myreq = { sizeof(struct EasyStruct),
                                0,
                                "Screen Change Confirmation",
                                "The selected image is %ldx%ldx%ldx",
                                "Do you wish to change the current in",
                                "screen to match this?",
                                "Yes/No" };
    /* Only change the GUI if the user wants to */
    if(EasyRequest(win, &myreq, NULL,
                  bmhd->w, bmhd->h, bmhd->nPlanes))
    {
        closeGUI();
    }
    /* If this fails, our local win will then be set to NULL
    openGUI(bmhd->nPlanes, bmhd->w, bmhd->h);
    win = getDrawWin();
}
}
```

The templates that can be used with "EasyRequest()"

Template	Type	Description
%ld	LONG	Decimal number (32-bit)
%lu	ULONG	Unsigned decimal number (32-bit)
%lx	ULONG	Hexadecimal number (32-bit)
%c	char	ASCII character
%s	char *	String

contact details. This can quite easily be done with a little requester as well.

The third example ("req2") adds an "About" menu item to the "Project" menu (in "menu.c") and code to handle it (in "idcmp.c", see Example 3). Take care to notice how the message string is split over two lines as two separate, literal strings. This is merely a convenience for the programmer to make the source code more readable; the compiler will join these into one big string.

Version information helps the user keep up-to-date with the latest program. To add this kind of thing in a useful way we need to be compatible with the Amiga's "VERSION" command. Luckily, this needs only to find a piece of text in the program in a particular format.

Example 4 shows the addition

(to "idcmp.c") of a suitable version string to the next version of our program ("req3"). We've defined string constants (using "#define") so that the "About" requester can be consistent and use the same information. When the version (or program name) changes we need to update only one place in our code: the appropriate "#define".

Screen change

We'll step up a gear for our next requester. When a picture is loaded the screen resolution and depth is changed to match it. This may not be exactly what the user wants and the documentation for the IFF library states that it can handle loading an ILBM into a different size bitmap, so we could give the user the choice of reusing the current screen

Example 5 shows another

Example 6

```
if(AddPart(filename, savereq > if_File, MAXFILENAME))
{
    struct EasyStruct myreq = { sizeof(struct EasyStruct),
        0,
        "File Overwrite Confirmation",
        "The file %s already exists in",
        "Do you want to overwrite it?",
        "Yes|No" };

    int exists = FALSE,
        BPTR lock;
    /* Test whether the file exists by attempting a "Lock()" */
    if(lock = Lock(filename, ACCESS_READ))
    {
        exists = TRUE,
        /* Don't forget to "UnLock()" */
        Unlock(lock);
    }
    /* Only save in the suggested file if it's new or the user wants to */
    if(!exists || EasyRequest(wm_Smyreq, NULL, savereq > if_File))
    {
        /* Make sure our bitmap is the same as the display */
        SyncSBitMap(wm->WLayer);

        /* . Rest of the code */
    }
}
```

extract from "req3". The "loadfile()" function (in "loadsave.c") has been updated to include user confirmation. The key points to note are the use of "%ld" in the message text and the additional arguments to "EasyRequest()".

Each "%ld" is a place holder for a number. The actual numbers are those supplied after the

correct size, depth and mode (in the usual way).

But if they select "No", the picture will be loaded over the current image, with any extra screen pixels and bit-planes left untouched. (If we'd wanted to completely replace any previous image we could have first cleared the screen in exactly the same way as the "new()" function.)

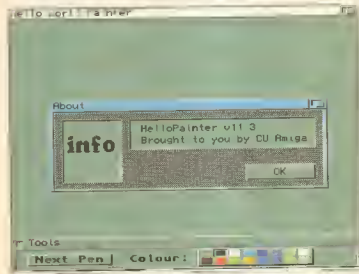
File-friendly

The final change is to make saving pictures less destructive. At present, saving overwrites any existing file without warning the user. Again, this is a job for a simple requester.

The only technical problem this time is how to test whether the file already exists. The simplest way is to try to get a lock on file (using the DOS function "Lock()"). The last example, "req4", implements this test and user confirmation scheme as you can see in the code snippet from the "save()" function shown in Example 6.

Well, that's it for requesters. Happy coding and see you next month.

Jason Hulac



▲ About the program

Surf's Up!

I'll have spam, spam, spam, spam, spam, spam, spam, spam - spam, spam and more spam (c'mon, it was going to appear sooner or later wasn't it).

NetGod speaks

I see the start of a disturbing trend in Amiga Internet software, that of programmers ignoring standards and setting their own. Adding custom tags to an email program to alter the display of messages in that program only is not the way the Internet is supposed to work.

It's bad enough when our browser programmers are struggling to keep up with the flood of new HTML "standards" introduced by Netscape and Internet Explorer, without introducing incompatibilities between our own programs.

Email is about communicating information. When I read a message, I want to know what the writer is saying, what he/she is thinking. So much is lost in the transfer from spoken word to written word, let's not hide any of what little meaning remains by cluttering it up with meaningless formatting codes etc.

The same applies to quoting and monstrous signatures. What is the point of taking the time to compose a message with meaningful content if you then place obstacles between your message and its recipient. Magazines get flooded with complaints if they do something like printing light coloured text across a light coloured photograph.

If it's worth saying, it's worth saying intelligibly, the old sixties slogan of "the medium is the message" definitely has no place on the Internet.

Spam ahoy

While the amount of spam (irrelevant messages posted to multiple newsgroups) on Usenet is increasing, much of it is hidden from users by spam cancellers. These are programs that scan the newsgroups for spam messages and then send out cancel messages causing the spam to be deleted from news servers. The organisations operating these services now feel that ISPs are taking less notice of spam, because of their efforts, quoting figures like 40% of Usenet posts are spam and another 40% are cancel messages, leaving only 20% for genuine traffic. As a result, they have decided to call a temporary, but indefinite, halt to their activities. From the beginning of April they are no longer cancelling spam. This means that unless your ISP takes their own anti-spam measures, you could start receiving a lot more. This puts the ball in the ISP's court, so if you ever feel like complaining about the spam you receive, now is the best time to do it.

Promote Responsible Net Commerce: Fight Spam!



World Of Amiga

The 1998 World of Amiga Show takes place a few days after this issue is published. It seems likely that there will be some sort of announcement from Amiga International at the show, so if you cannot make it in person, keep an eye on the main news sites, such as CU Amiga Online and Amiga Web Directory. World of Amiga also has its own web site, at <http://www.cu-amiga.co.uk/wos/>



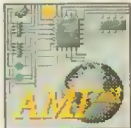
Browser updates

Both IBrowse and Voyager have seen recent updates, available from their respective web sites. Voyager 2.95 is an update for both registered and unregistered users. IBrowse 1.2 is available only to owners of the complete version.

Both have had several changes, improvements and bug fixes, and Voyager is noticeably faster here although there is still no sign of JavaScript support for either of

Aminet

Once again, the main Aminet site has suffered a hardware failure. While the mirror sites carry on working whenever this happens, there are no new uploads sent out to these sites. This time, the main German site took over the central duties for a while. Files



uploaded there or to other sites were mirrored across the Aminet network, although the mailing list still didn't work. Hopefully this means Aminet is becoming less dependent on the central site to keep working, which can only be a good thing as the number of files available continues to increase.

Saku 98

The newsgroups and mailing lists are buzzing with interpretations and



ibrowse 1.2

them. They both now have the facility to decode images in fast RAM, even without a graphics card, which should eliminate many of the problems people experience with graphics intensive sites.

There has also been a recent release of inline image decoders for AWeb, finally freeing it from its dependence on datatypes

rumours based on a speech by Petro Tyschtschenko at Saku 98 in Finland, in which he is alleged to have said "OS 3.5 - we are trying to integrate Netscape". Unsurprisingly, this has generated a great deal of comment, opinion and hot air, but we'll just have to wait for a formal statement on the contents of 3.5. Petro is also reported to have stated that AI will "present our new concept for Amiga developers" at the World of Amiga show. Is the waiting nearly over? ■

Nail Bothwick

Surf of the Month

Neil Bothwick goes browsing the web - he's given up surfing because he keeps falling off the baud! (arf-arf.)

By way of change we are going to move away from Amiga specific pages to areas of more general interest in this edition of Surf of the Month.

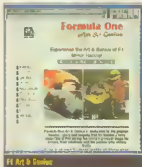
Football, you can't escape it.

The finale of the English football season, the FA Cup final, coincides with the publication of this issue and the World of Amiga show, so this seems a good time to mention



the site that contains a wide range of information: the site of the main sponsors of the Premier League Carling. With its comprehensive results and statistics, as well as projected tables and archives of previous years. It's also ideal for settling arguments or cheating at a pub quiz.

On a more global scale, there are several sites dedicated to World Cup 98. The official one is at <http://www.worldcup.com>, with authoritative information on schedules, ticket sales etc. But for really



interesting trivia you really need to visit the unofficial sites, such as <http://www.wldcup.com>.

Staying with sport for while, there are a lot of Formula 1 Grand Prix enthusiasts on the Internet. I suppose it's a techno thing (no Tony, no that sort of techno) with both computers and F1 having an appeal to fans of technology. There are a



huge number of F1 sites, from the very good to the pretty dire at the top end of this scale is 'Formula One Art and Genius'. It is a well constructed site with good graphics and plenty of in-depth information by someone with an obvious love for the sport.

Another good source of Formula One information can be found on Yahoo. This is not an "enthusiast" site, instead it contains lots of factual and up to date information, including qualifying time and race results, as and when they happen

URLs

FA Carling	http://www/fa-carling.com
World Cup 98	http://www.worldcup.com
Greeting cards	http://www.shoobox.com/funny/funny.asp
Mike's Web Resources	http://www.u-net.com/mike
F1 Art & Genius	http://www/f1-grandprix.com
Yahoo F1	http://www.yahoo.co.uk/f1/
live/7http://www.f1-live.com/GB/	
reallybig.com	http://www.reallybig.com/default.htm
Mystique corporation	http://www.mysticorp.u-net.com
CU Amiga Online	http://www.cu-amiga.co.uk

It'll be alright on the Birthday?

Have you ever looked at a so called "humorous" greeting card and thought "I could do better"? Well there is now a site by a major greeting card company showing the efforts of some of the people who thought just that. Shoobox is a division of Hallmark and their web site includes a selection of "out takes".

If you think a good greeting for a birthday card is "Happy birthday to a great kid. Hope it's more fun than nipping the panel cord out of some video game character" this is the site for you.

Web resources

While many people are happy to browse other web sites, sooner or later many feel the need to create their own. However, after spending so much time looking at high quality sites, with impressive graphics, you wonder how you will ever manage to create something that looks good. As always the solution is on the web. There are many sites of WWW resources, from simple graphics for buttons and backdrops, to extensive tutorial on HTML and freely distributable CGI and JavaScript scripts.

Whatever you need, the chances are it's waiting for you somewhere. Mike's Web Resources started as a collection of graphics and links on a home page and just kept growing. There is now a huge collection of graphics, HTML examples and just

about anything you need, including a form to type in some text and have it sent back to you as a 3D rendered logo. Reallybig.com is as big as its name implies, with a massive set of resources and links to other sites. Not only graphics and tutorials, but scripts, hit counters, logging tools and much more.

Educational Amigas

One area where the Amiga has always been lacking is in educational software. This is an extremely important area since it is often used as a justification for buying a computer in the first place.

One company working to correct this omission is Mystique. Their site is sponsored by Amiga International, showing the importance they place on this market. The site contains information on their products, together with news and a section entitled "Kids Pages".

Neil Bothwick



Wired World

STFax is a fine fax program. Now we investigate its other talents by setting up a voicemail system.

With a name like STFax, it's not hard to guess that this is a fax program. However it has several other functions too, such as voicemail. Now you can use your Amiga as anything from a basic telephone answering machine to a pretty sophisticated voicemail system with multiple mailboxes, feedback and much more.

We will look at the features available and how to integrate them into a script, you can then pick and choose which of these are relevant to your needs.

Basic telephone answering

Before we can use STFax for voice messages we need to check a few preferences settings. In the Misc section, turn on Auto Answer and set Mode to either Voice Only or Fax/Voice. In the Timeout section, set the modern timeout to the lowest figure that doesn't cause errors. Start at 3 and work up or down from there. A high timeout can result in STFax taking longer to answer incoming fax or voice calls.

Once you have saved the settings, you can select Voice Settings from the Voice menu. STFax comes already set up for basic telephone answering. All you need to do is record some messages. STFax insists that you record certain "system" messages, although these will not be used in a simple answering machine script. The important message is the one you use for your greeting: something like "I can't answer the phone right now, please leave a message." You should already have a default voice box and a script that consists of a single command, RECORD MSG. Double-click on this and select the greeting message you previously recorded. Save the script and you are ready to go.

The best way to test your script is to call from another phone. If you are a dedicated nethead with two

phone lines, or you have a mobile phone, this is easy to do. The script editor also has a test mode to check out your scripts, but it is still best to do a final test from another phone. This is important when we move onto more advanced scripts.

Other features

Apart from a basic answering system, STFax has many other voicemail features. Let's have a look at the main ones before looking at how they can be integrated into a system.

Menu

Present the caller with a list of choices that they select from using the buttons on their phone.

Multiple voice boxes

Callers can leave messages for different people. So each person gets only their own messages.

Call Operator

Alerts the user of an incoming call. If there is no answer it returns the caller to the menu to leave a message.

Feedback

Sand documents to anyone calling from a phone attached to a fax machine (or fax modem).

CallID

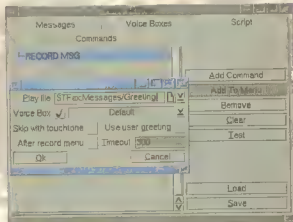
Use different messages for callers from specific numbers. Handy if you want to pass a message to someone but have to go out. Just record the message and attach it to their phone number.

Call screening

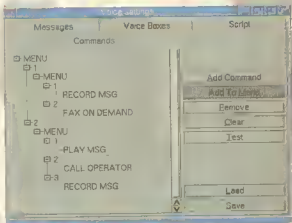
Used in conjunction with CallID, gives priority to or blacklists specified numbers. Useful for blocking calls from telemarketing companies for production editors hassling you for copy.

Remote access

Each user can call in and hear the messages in their password-protected voice box.

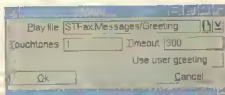


▲ A basic answering machine script



▲ This is the completed script

Configuring the first NEW com



Voice modems and CallerID

Not all modems support all the features of STFax. Some modems have limited voice features, or poor recording quality. It's worth checking this when buying a modem. CallerID also relies on support from the modem, and the UK system is different from the International standard. To use the CallerID features in Britain, you need a modem that supports the UK system, whereas most modems should work with other countries' systems.

password. The passwords will enable you to listen to the messages from another phone. You will need to create a directory for each to store its messages: say Messages/0001 and Messages/0002. Now you have the messages and mailboxes ready click on the Script tab to build the script. The default script has 8 single items of RECORD MSG, remove this to start with an empty script.

Creating the script

The flow chart starts with an initial greeting, leading to a choice. Click on Add Command, select MENU from the list and select your introductory message for Play file. Set Touchtones to 1 to have the menu wait for the caller to press a single key on the phone. Select the new menu, click on Add To Menu and put "1" in the ID field. This is the section that will be executed when the caller presses "1" at this menu.

The caller has to make another choice here, so add another MENU with the appropriate message and another "1" option. Select the new entry, click on Add Command and then RECORD MSG. Enter the relevant message file here, tick the voice box gadget and select the Sales box. When the caller presses "1" at this menu, they will be asked to leave a message that will be stored in the Sales voice box.

The next option is to receive a document by fax. Reselect the previous MENU entry then Add To Menu, give this one ID 2. Select the new entry, click on Add Command and then FAX ON DEMAND. You can have several previously created faxes available here, give each one a different ID number and list them with their IDs in the message file you play from here. If only one fax is available, the user still needs to press a key to start the transfer. As before, set Touchtones to 1.

Now go back to the first MENU entry select Add To Menu and ID 2. Once again this leads to another menu, this time with three choices, so create the new MENU and select Add To Menu three times with IDs

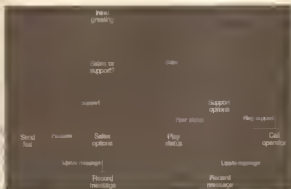
1, 2 and 3. The first option is to hear a recorded message: so select "1", and use Add Command to add a PLAY MSG item with the appropriate message. For the second option add a CALL OPERATOR. This will notify you that someone wants to speak to you, and play a message to the caller while waiting for you to answer. If you do not answer within the Timeout period STFax will play the No Operator message and return to the previous menu. The third option on this menu is another RECORD MSG, this is for the caller to select if the Call Operator fails. Set it to use the Support voice box. This way you can have your voicemail system divert some calls straight to the recording system, while passing others through for personal attention, when available.

That's it, the script is finished and will be ready to use once you've tested it. Make sure you set touchtones to 1 whenever there is this option and that all message files have been correctly set up.

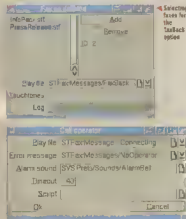
Using STFax for your own needs

This example demonstrates the use of the main voicemail features of STFax, in a way that can be adapted to most business or family situations. Once you have it set up, it should be fairly easy to adapt to your own needs. ■

Neil Bothwick



▲ A flow chart makes organising and creating your voicemail system as much easier



▲ The Call Operator location

More complex example

Now let's build a script using the main features. Although this example is for a business use, it can just as easily be used in a family setting. We'll use the example of an "imaginary" ISP who wants to handle a variety of calls out of normal office hours like this:

- Separate sales and support calls from each other
- Give sales enquirers the option of leaving a message or receiving literature by fax
- Allow subscribers to listen to a pre-recorded status message
- Give subscribers the chance to speak to a member of the support staff if available, or leave a message otherwise

Before we can create the script we need to work out exactly what will happen to each caller and then record the various messages. So before you reach for your mouse, pick up a pencil and paper instead

The voicemail system you set up will be the first contact many people have with you, so you need to make it clear and concise. People do not want to listen to one long message after another before they get where they want. It's a good idea to listen to other voicemail systems to get an idea of what is good and what is frustrating or plain annoying. Then put the script on paper using a flow chart. If you cannot key the script but clearly on paper, then you callers will probably find it confusing too. You can see how the flow chart for our example system makes it simpler to understand what is going on.

The next step is to prepare the messages. Once again, write each message down to make sure it is clear and suitable. Think about the order in which you present menu options. A new caller will not want to listen through several options before being offered the most basic choices, so put those first. A regular caller may know which choices he wishes to make and will be able to interrupt the menu message, so there is no time lost in putting those options later.

Once you've outlined the script and messages, it's time to put it all together. Select Voice Settings from the Voice menu and record your messages in the Messages section, either recording them direct or importing previously sampled files.

This example uses two mailboxes, so click on the Voice Boxes tab and add two new boxes called Sales and Support with IDs of 1 and 2 respectively and give each one a

There are many other things you can do, especially with the addition of some ARexx. For example, you can have STFax automatically email received messages or faxes as they come in. It should also be possible to use ARexx to send a message to a pager whenever a message is recorded. Instead of ringing in to keep checking for messages, you only call when you know there are messages to be collected.

Scala MM300

PART
4

It might look rather basic, but don't be deceived: Scala has some really advanced tricks up its multimedia sleeve.

We saw last month how it could control your home TV and hi-fi using the power of ARexx and the Airlink Infrared interface, and that's only the start.

This month however we give over the tutorial to answering some of the many questions which you've asked about using Scala to create your own projects. If you've created any exciting scripts, why not send them into the magazine office, so we can put the best on the CU Amiga cover disk?

Questions and Answers

Q1. What's the quickest way to make a slideshow?

A. Start with a blank project, and click on New. This will bring up the background selector. Find the directory with all the images you want to appear in the slideshow.

Now select them all in one go by holding down the shift key as you click on them. When you click on OK, all the files will be loaded as new pages in your script.

Q2. How can I apply the same wipe quickly to a collection of pages?

A. Click on the Wipe slot in the first page in the collection you want to change. When the usual Wipe win-

dow appears, select your wipe you want to use. Before you click on OK, make sure there is a tick on the "To End" button. This will alter the wipe settings on all the subsequent pages. You can do the same thing to alter the Pause setting.

Q3. Can I alter the pre-set wipes?

A. Yes, although not all to the same extent. When selecting the wipe you want to use, try pressing on the following keys. Notice too that using the numeric keypad it is possible to change the direction in which some of the wipes operate.

- 1 Ease in
- 0 Ease out

- d Damped
- b Backwards
- c Cleave page before wipe
- i Terapose - turn the wipe 90 degrees
- s Soft fade - fade the display slightly during the wipe

Q4. How can I create a blank backdrop for my scripts?

A. If you want a backdrop which doesn't consist of an IFF picture backdrop, here's what you do:

- 1 Assuming your script is empty click on New to create the new page.
- 2 You'll be placed in the usual "Select a Background page" requester.
- 3 Don't select any pattern, just click on "OK". You can now select the screen resolution and colour depth for Scala to use.

You can now add your own details, if required, using the drawing tools.



Q5. How can I change the colour of this backdrop from plain blue?

A. Create the page as detailed above. Now click on the Palette button, and you'll bring up a new window. One of the options will be Background. Select a colour from the horizontal colour stripe, and then click on the Background button.

Q6. How can I add two sound effects to the same page?

A. Add the first sound effect in the usual way: click on the Sound button in the script list, and select the sound effect. Now click in the sound slot in the blank line directly underneath your first page, and add the second sound effect.

Q7. Can I use other Scala Scripts inside my current project?

A. Yes. This is a great way of organising your work. If you have created a great introduction script, you can use it in your other projects by simply including it as a page.



of its own. Save the script you want to use in other projects, giving it a sensible name.

From your new project, click on New as though you were going to add a new page as usual. Click on the Scripts button and locate your saved script. The new project will display the script on a single page even if it consists of dozens of its own pages.

This makes it easy to drag and drop it to change the order it is played in.

Q8. How can I adjust timing to sync my slideshow to music?



A. Scala allows you to select the timing for pages in an interactive way: you can watch the presentation and click on the mouse when you want the pages to change.

To set this up, click on the Pause button and adjust the time setting to read "Record Timing: All". Then click on this button, and your script will start running. Click the right mouse button every time you want a page to change.

Q9. Can I make my own buttons in the file requestor?

A. If you find yourself constantly loading from a particular location, from CD for example, it can be a real time-saver to create a new button. From the file requestor, locate the directory that you want to use.

1. Now click on the empty button at the bottom of the list on the right hand of the screen.
2. You'll be asked to enter a new name, and select a colour for the button.
3. That's it! Your new button will be added to the list.

Q10. What does Genlock mode do in the System Menu?

A. Genlock mode forces Scala to display its menu in a transparent way so you can see the video signal underneath. By default the menus are solid.

Q.11 What's the difference between Dynamic and Static page buffers?

A. This is another setting in the System menu. If you use a Static buffer, all the images and sounds required by a script will be loaded before it starts playing.

This can obviously take up a lot of memory, but the result is much faster and smoother. By default, the setting is Dynamic, and so pages are loaded and purged as required.

Q.12 How can I make a line of text scroll across the screen?

A. To make text crawl along the screen, create a new page and type in a line of text in the usual way. Highlight the text and then select the IN wipe button on the editing screen.

This will bring up the Text Wipe display. Now select one of the two crawl wipes. The first wipe will scroll the background too: this is smooth but can destroy your carefully drawn background.

Try the second crawl wipe instead: although with some background (those with lots of colours) or larger fonts this can flicker slightly.

John Kennedy



Keyboard Shortcuts

Main Menu

F1 / cursor up	Previous event
F2 / cursor down	Next event
Shift F1 / cursor left	First event
Shift F2 / cursor right	Last event
R Amiga 0	Quit
R Amiga N	New
R Amiga E	Edit
Right Amiga at 1/2	Delete
DEL	Delete
Space	Run
R Amiga R	Run
R Amiga L	Load script
R Amiga S	Save script

Edit Menu

F6	View / Detect at 1/2 - 1/4 page
F8	Wipe / Wipe
F9	Wipe / In Wipe
F10	Wipe / Out Wipe
R Amiga I	Wipe / Wipe / Upper / Lower text
R Amiga	Wipe / Wipe / Text / Text
R Amiga X	Wipe / Wipe / Text / Text
R Amiga C	Wipe / Wipe / Text / Text
R Amiga	Wipe / Wipe / Text / Text
R Amiga V	Wipe / Wipe / Text / Text
R Amiga Space	Wipe / Wipe / Text / Text
R Amiga A	Wipe / Wipe / Text / Text
R Amiga G	Wipe / Wipe / Text / Text
R Amiga J	Wipe / Wipe / Text / Text
R Amiga H	Wipe / Wipe / Text / Text
Shift R Amiga I	Wipe / Wipe / Text / Text
Shift R Amiga J	Wipe / Wipe / Text / Text
Shift R Amiga K	Wipe / Wipe / Text / Text
Amiga	Wipe / Wipe / Text / Text
Amiga O	Wipe / Wipe / Text / Text
ELP	Wipe / Wipe / Text / Text
ESCape	Wipe / Wipe / Text / Text

Testing one two three four five six fleece w... now and eve



Reviews Index

There's no need to go searching through countless magazines trying to locate a specific product review. We've compiled all of the technical & game software reviews from the last two and a bit years up to the March '98 issue of CU Amiga.

We're alternating between two categories in subsequent issues: this month we've got games and CD-ROMs, next month we'll switch the index to productivity software and hardware. We'll also give updates from each month as they happen.

Bear in mind that the scores listed are the original scores awarded to the products at the time of their reviews. These should be taken as a rough guide only, as they are all relative to the rival products and prices that were available at those times, which may have changed since.

If you would rather see us re-rate the products with hindsight and in context with newer rival products, let us know. Likewise, if you would like any other specific info or service from this index then please feel free to give us your opinions on the back of a postcard or sealed envelope.

The first ten to put their thoughts into words will get a Wizard Mouse free of charge. This 3-button mouse was accidentally left out of our recent Input Device round-up, which was ironic, as it would have been the highest scoring product of them all! Anyway, write to

Wizard Mouse Compo,
CU Amiga,
37-39 Millharbour
Isle of Dogs
London
E14 9TZ

title	Type	Comment	Review Date	Score
CDs				
Light ROM 5	3D objects	A good collection of objects and textures for the Amiga's renderers	Oct 97	88%
Dinosaurs ROM	3D objects	Very professional objects of a range of dinosaurs	Oct 97	98%
Multimedia Deck drops	Backdrop pictures	The artwork is of high quality but it's dull	Jan 97	82%
Card Games	Card games	Not just card games but others such as Monopoly and Chess	Feb 97	90%
DEM ROM	DEM Files	Over 1800 DEM maps of North America	Oct 97	84%
Emo CD	Demos	If you like art and sound demos you will love it	Feb 97	88%
Geek Gadgets 2	Development tools	There is a lot going on this disc but it is for hard-core coders only	Sep 97	84%
Amiga Repair Kit	Diagnostics	Not much for the money but Diskalv is very powerful	Feb 97	71%
Epic Interactive Encyclopedia	Encyclopedia	A really worthwhile disc	Apr 97	91%
The Learning Curve	Encyclopedia	A very impressive resource	Jan 97	93%
Epic Encyclopedia of the Paranormal	Encyclopedia	Very polished but a little shallow	Jul 97	87%
Fantasia	Fantasies	A heart bry for fantasies	Jan 98	90%
The Games Room	Games	If you don't have a collection just yet this is going to be the best you can get	Jan 99	90%
Scale Plug-in	Graphics for Scale	Anyone seriously using Scale can never have enough resources so get this	Sep 97	89%
Imagine 3D PD	Imagine objects	If you are an Imagine user this CD could save you some time	Jan 97	88%
Into the Net	Internet	Full of internet tools and loads of sample web pages	May 97	91%
MIDI Not	MIDI files	Basically a massive collection of MIDI files	Oct 97	78%
Amiga Desktop Video CD2	Pictures and sounds	Full of pictures, fonts and sounds to use in your presentations	Mar 97	90%
The Hidden Tenth	Reference	Not quite polished enough but lots to explore	Jul 97	90%
History of the World Cup	Reference	A football fan's delight	Jan 97	90%
17bit Level 9	Various	There are so many files on here there is bound to be something for you	Mar 88	81%
Virtual Computer Pets	Various	A large collection of Tempest-style type programs along with various pics	Mar 89	86%
Aminet 21	Various	More of the latest downloads from Aminet	Jan 98	89%
Aminet 20	Various	More of the latest Aminet downloads	Oct 87	91%
Amiga Resource European Edition	Various	A good selection of commercial software along with the usual demos	Oct 87	82%
Aminet Set 5	Various	The ultimate CD collection	Oct 87	94%
Aminet 19	Various	More of the latest downloads from Aminet	Sep 97	88%
Epic Collection 3	Various	This CD seems to have a something from each Epic CD as there is plenty	Aug 97	82%
AGA Experience Vol. 3	Various	Packed with demos games and animations there is something here for all	Aug 97	91%
AGA Toolkit 97	Various	The amount of stuff on this CD is truly awesome	Apr 97	92%
Aminet Set 4	Various	Unless you have been collecting the single Aminet discs this is a must	Apr 97	92%
Meeting Pearls 4	Various	Similar to Aminet but more technical	Mar 97	98%
Aminet 15 & 16	Various	Another selection of the latest Aminet downloads	Mar 97	90%
Emo CD 2	Various Demos	A strong collection good for someone starting their CD collection	Sep 97	95%
Aminet 14	Various Demos	Not the most impressive Aminet CD but still excellent	Jan 97	90%
System Booster	WYS Utilities	There are 2100 utilities on this CD that will improve your system	Feb 97	92%
Web Explodes CD	Web client	Superb web design package	Apr 97	92%

Game	Type	Comment	Review Date	Score
Why	Adventure	A superb game which looks great too	Feb 98	92%
The Strangers AGA	Beat 'em up	Lots of fancy dressing around a basic beat 'em up	Oct 97	60%
Master Axe	Beat 'em up	Not quite up to SF2 but still good	Apr 97	76%
Fighting Spirit ECS	Beat 'em up	Basically the same as the AGA version	Feb 97	82%
Fighting Spirit	Beat 'em up	The best SF clone on the Amiga	Jan 97	93%
Samurai Storm	Doom style	Disappointing third installment but the originals still cut it	Jan 98	80%
Twins CD	Doom style	Well worth a look if you like blowing away cartoon octopi	Dec 97	85%
Twins IV	Doom style	Not particularly original but playable and polished	Sep 97	95%
Trapped 2	Doom style RPG	Sophisticated graphics plus a great game!	Nov 97	92%
Trapped	Doom style RPG	A good concept but poor execution	Aug 97	79%
The Shadow of the Third Moon	Flight sim	A superb game which looks great too	Jan 98	92%
Swiship 2000	Flight sim	It is guaranteed to keep you up every night	Dec 97	90%
Daylight	Flight sim	So badly programmed not even die hard fans would like it	Mar 97	30%
817 Flying Fortress	Flight sim	What it lacks in excitement it makes up for in atmosphere	Mar 97	79%
Angiot	Flight sim	Outdated sim that lacks speed	Mar 97	68%
John Barnes Football CD	Football	This game should never have been given a re-release	Dec 97	20%
FA Soccer	Football	It looks great in the screenshot but frankly it's rubbish	May 97	50%
Tenri World of Soccer 96-97	Football	Still the best footy game on the Amiga	Jan 97	85%
Snipe Pin CD	Fruit machine sim	Cheap testicles and very bad	Dec 97	2%
Sensible Golf	Golf	If you are looking for a game that will give you a good laugh this is it	Nov 97	87%
PGA Tour Golf	Golf	This is an essential buy for all sports fans	May 97	83%
Championship Manager 2	Manager sim	If it need modern spin Amiges it would score much higher	Dec 97	70%
Euro League Manager	Manager sim	DK to look at and fully playable(ish)	May 97	54%
Amiga Billiard Demos	Pinkie	A few new tricks but the older dogs are still tops	Mar 98	65%
DeEscape	Platform	Art or computer game? Who cares when it's this much fun!	Feb 98	82%
Impossible Mission 2025	Platform	The game is a bit easy but still fun	Feb 97	80%
First Light CD	Puzzle	Vital Light is one of the very best puzzle Tetris games around	Dec 97	98%
Misilious	Puzzle	If you're looking for a challenging puzzle look no further	Jul 97	63%
Big Red Adventure	Puzzle	A must for people who loved Monkey Island	May 97	90%
Blockhead	Puzzle	Puzzle fans will enjoy, otherwise steer clear	Apr 97	67%
Minkano Farballs	Puzzle	Excellent Tetris Clone	Feb 97	88%
Street Racer	Racer	Fun and varied races best played with a few friends	Nov 97	87%
Flying High	Racer	Great looking game unfortunately no gameplay	Sep 97	68%
Road Rash	Racing	This game doesn't have lasting appeal but is good in the short term	May 97	72%
Legends CD	RPG	This one will keep the RPG fan going for quite a while	Dec 97	75%
Blade	RPG	The hack and slash aspect is fun but it can leave you feeling empty	Dec 97	86%
Sword	Shoot 'em up	Nice try but in the end Sword doesn't quite cut it	Feb 98	78%
Final Odyssey	Shoot 'em up	Impressive stuff reminiscent of old Brimstone Brothers fare	Feb 88	87%
Guardian CD	Shoot 'em up	A cross between Defender and StarWing, this game is very satisfying	Dec 97	80%
Total Carnage CD	Shoot 'em up	Total rubbish more like	Dec 97	38%
Canon Fodder 2	Shoot 'em up	If you liked CF1 then you will like this too	Dec 97	90%
Canon Fodder	Shoot 'em up	This game is still great fun to play and it's full of laughs	Aug 97	73%
Vendetta 2175	Shoot 'em up	Smooth and professional but unimpressive	Dec 97	90%
Mega Typhoon	Shoot 'em up	Although average it is not unplayable	Jul 97	74%
Castle Kingdoms	Shoot 'em up	Too easy for anyone but DK for the younger players	Jan 97	68%
Desert Strike	Shoot 'em up	There's enough action to keep any wannabe happy for weeks	May 97	90%
IPB	Shoot 'em up	A fast smooth scrolling shoot 'em up	Mar 97	75%
Special Forces	Shoot 'em up	A bit tedious and slow	Feb 97	55%
Tommy Gun	Shoot 'em up	Scrolling shoot 'em up which is too easy to lost	Feb 97	60%
Chaos Engine 2	Shoot 'em up	Great single or multiplayer game	Jan 97	80%
Wing Commander	Space sim	A good zap that's worth a show	May 97	82%
Starlord	Space sim	You would be much better off getting Frontier instead	Mar 97	35%
Utopia 2	Strategy	It won't win the Nebula but it's still fun	Jan 98	81%
Mobile Warfare	Strategy	World pebbles get a good score a year ago	Mar 98	89%
Zone 2	Strategy	The forerunner of Command & Conquer this is absorbing and challenging	Nov 97	92%
Raided Tycoon	Strategy	It takes time to master but once you do it is an incredible game	Oct 97	98%
Civilization	Strategy	One of the best games ever produced	Oct 97	94%
Theme Park	Strategy	A great game for anyone wishing to build their own Disney World	May 97	88%
Tiny Troops	Strategy	Good game but not a classic	Apr 97	99%
Colonization	Strategy	Not quite the sequel to Civilization but still good	Feb 97	85%
UFO	Strategy	A great strategy game which is still a classic	Feb 97	93%
Ritz Tennis	Tennis	Over simple controls and terrible graphics make this game a no-no	Nov 97	49%
Ultimate Super Skudsmake	Top down racer	If you don't already own it buy it otherwise avoid	Mar 98	70%
Burnout	Top down racer	The gameplay doesn't seem to go anywhere	Mar 97	43%

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Next Month

Big News!

Next issue will come complete with some rather large news from the horse's mouth (that's Amiga Inc to you and me). At the time of going to press we're still not sure what it is, so we can't promise you it's finally going to be time to crack open that bottle of lemonade and liberate the suspiciously soft marshmallow biscuits. However, we are assured it's going to be BIG news this time, so, lining ourselves up for another big anticlimax we've bated our breath (whatever the hell that means) and sat up in anticipation like a puppy waiting for a bone from his master. All will be revealed next month!

Genetic Species Threatening to come from behind and usurp the mighty Quake, Vulcan's 3D blaster will be getting the full review treatment

Another late entrant into the stalls, Tornado 3D is hoping to steal Lightwave's crown. A tall order that could be more realistic than it sounds!

CU Amiga - July issue on sale 11th June

AMIGA
MAGAZINE

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O&A

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Breaking the 4Gb barrier

I recently bought a Quantum 43Gb replacement hard drive for my Amiga 1 rushed home with it, plugged it in, ran HDToolBox, chose the 'Read configuration' button, and it said that the size of the drive was 14Mb.

With some tweaking of the values, I came to the conclusion that HDToolBox 'wraps around' at the 2Gb mark before entering negative values. So I kept those values (for want of any other solution) and so far so good, except I have a 2Gb hard drive rather than 43Gb.

So how do I format my new baby to its full 43Gb capacity?

Shay Riggs, Cambridge

This problem is caused by the fact that AmigaDOS locates the blocks on a disk by using a 32bit address. Consequently, the maximum number of blocks is 2^{32} , which works out as 4Gb. Some utilities even treat this 32bit number as signed, that is plus or minus 2Gb.

The upshot of all this is that AmigaDOS doesn't support disk sizes greater than 4Gb and in fact it is safest to keep disk partitions smaller than 2Gb. However, all is not lost: there are several software patches available which work around this limitation.

Try, for example, FFSTD54 (which should be on this month's cover CD) or giga device. Also, Amiga International have a beta version of a fixed file system without the 4Gb limit which can be downloaded from their web-site (it would be safe to bet that this will be a feature of OS3.5 when it appears).

As these solution are patches (or hacks), it must be remembered that they do not guarantee 100% stability.

Sourcin' chips

I purchased a cheap second-hand GVP 1230 accelerator for the Amiga 1200. The accelerator has 2 x 64 pin SIMM sockets. What sort of memory does this accelerator take? Is it possible to buy 64 pin SIMMs?

A. Anonymous, Bristol

Unfortunately, you have to use GVP's own brand SIMMs in their accelerators - the 64 pin variety coming in 1, 4 or 16Mb sizes. As to where to buy them, I suspect your best bet would be to try to get them second-hand.

GVP are still in existence and you could buy direct from them in the States - but this would be expensive. You can check out GVP's web-site at <http://www.gvp.com/>.

Ghost in the machine?

I own an A1200 with a Blizzard 1230 IV accelerator which has 8Mb of fast ram on board. I also

have a 1.2Gb hard disk and an extra external floppy drive. In order to play a game, Desert Strike I had to disable the accelerator so it would run properly. On reset I held down the number '2' to disable the accelerator and unfortunately (though this is not the problem) the hard disk for some reason disappears from the system.

Now on to my problem (if you could call it that). I held down the reset keys for 8 seconds to re-enable the accelerator (and the hard disk) and something weird happened. Workbench appeared to boot as usual but did not. Instead the screen turned black and a blue banner appeared. In the centre of this banner the MagicWB logo appeared (the triangle like thing with the picture of a mouse pointer in the centre of it).

Then a deep synth-like sound was played which gradually got quieter and quieter and the 'Dolby SurroundSound' logo appeared in the bottom left hand corner of the banner. The screen faded and my Workbench loaded as normal with no errors. I want to know what it



▲ Restarted Workbench or Trojan Horse? You've heard the facts, now decide for yourself.

mes and how I can make it happen again. I believe it was some kind of MagicWB program but as I cannot find the program which does this in any of my hard disk directories I am slightly worried. Though, perhaps it was a virus or some kind of Artificial Intelligence (maybe my Amiga has become self aware, or maybe not) I do hope so.

Anyway I also checked the start-up sequence and user-startup but there was no trace of this program. I am being perfectly sincere and this DID happen. Please believe me.

Interview via e-mail

Calm down - I believe you. The same thing has happened to me, and the first time it happened I was rather surprised, too.

Unfortunately, your Amiga has not become spontaneously self-aware. It is in fact caused by the MagicWB pen daemon which is installed into your startup sequence by the MagicWB package. I don't know what triggers it to display the logo and play the sound: since it happens only every so often, it is probably random.

The sound sample that is actually played can be found in the `s` drawer on your system disk and is called `mt1.dat`. You can play this with, say, the `Play64` command to convince yourself that your Amiga is not alive. My advice to you is to get rid of `MegaWB` and install `Newsoms` instead. It is far less spooky and much nicer to look at. By the way, when submitting a question via e-mail, please sign your name on it: it is difficult to decipher some of the more cryptic user IDs.

The end of the line


PERIPHERALS I have an A1200 tower with a Squirrel SCSI device connected to a CD-ROM drive, 2 hard drives and a tape streamer.

1. Does the ZipPlus drive have built in termination?
2. Does termination of a SCSI chain have to be the last physical device (i.e. the one furthest from the controller), or the device with the highest ID?
3. My Squirrel transfers data at about 1.2-1.4 Mbp per second, but takes up 100% CPU time (AIBB) is this because it's not DMA (direct memory access)? If I hit a SCSI interface to my Apollo, will it hog less CPU time?

Mark Sudlow, Cheshire

Tech Tip: Joystick port sharer



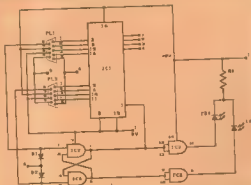
 The following circuit was submitted by Craig, CU Amiga Magazine. We have not tested this circuit, and so cannot be held responsible for any damage caused by building and using it.

The Sticky Box

When was the last time you wanted to play a two-joystick game before discovering you had to fiddle around unplugging the mouse? It was during one of these moments that I came up with the idea for this design. Functionally speaking, it works more or less like the excellent

Roboshift by Steve Collins, although his design does have a few improvements over this one. Most notably, it always defaults to the mouse port and the whole thing is built with ultra-compact SMT components. The Sticky Box is fully automatic so you simply just have to press fire switch over to joystick, or click the mouse button to switch to mouse (just like the Roboshift).

The main advantage that the Sticky Box has over Roboshift is that it's seven quid cheaper. While Roboshift is only available commercially for about £17, this design can be bought for less



- Yes. The Zip plus is a rather clever version of the normal Zip drive. It is clever in that it can be connected (although not simultaneously) to both PCs via a parallel interface and to Amigas and Macs via a SCSI interface. It automatically detects by which interface it is connected and acts accordingly. It also features automatic termination.
2. SCSI chains must be terminated at both ends, that is, the first and last devices must be terminated. The SCSI interface itself is considered to be the first device in the chain and will have termination built in. The last device must be terminated in some fashion - if it is an external device it will usually have some form of switchable or automatic termination built-in.
3. Probably not. The Squirrel is a slow SCSI device mainly because of the poor bandwidth of the PCMCIA slot. And the fact that it is non-DMA means that it steals all the CPU's time during SCSI access.

- resulting in the computer grinding to a halt.

The Apollo SCSI interface is unfortunately no solution. Unlike the phase5 add-on, it is not a true DMA device and performs poorly. You would probably be better off staying with your Squirmel for just now.

Old games



Is it still possible to get hold of a copy of The Secret of Monkey Island Two – one of the greatest games of all time that I unfortunately don't have. Great msg by the way and cheers

Andy T. e-mail

We get many queries like this. The answer to all of them is simple and the same: try contacting a software distributor like Epic Marketing (Tel. 01793 490988) or Alice Mediansoft (Tel. 01623 487579).

then a beginner and is perfectly suitable as a first time construction project. Even if you have never wielded a soldering iron before, this project is simple enough for almost anyone.

Construction


Building the Sticky Box is a simple matter of stuffing the PCB/Varoboard and wiring the flying 9-pin socket. Two points are worth noting: pin 1 of IC1 and IC2 (marked with a notch) face towards the D connectors. Also, take care when wiring the flying 9-pin D socket: the lead spacing is quite tight and you will need a small (typically 17 watt) soldering iron to do the job. A magnifying glass is helpful to read the pin numbers, too.

What you will need

- IC1 - 74LS157
IC2 - 74LS00
D1, D2 - 1N4148 Switching
diodes
LD1 - 5mm LED (10mA) Green
LD2 - 5mm LED (10mA) Red
R1 - 1K5 0.6W Metal film 2%
PL1, PL2 - 8-pin D socket
PL3 - 9-pin D socket (in-line)
Cabin - 1/2M either 8x7-core with
screen or 10-way ribbon
Veropins - 9 off
IC Sockets - 14-pin DIL x 1, 16-pin
DIL x 1
Case To suit

A brighter Workbench



 This is driving me mad! No matter what I try to do, including installing NewIcons, I cannot seem to bring colour to my workbench. Even background pictures come out in those "restful" four-colour combinations.

True, I can use PreIs to change the four colours, but what happened to technicolour glory? I'm either missing something, or I am doing something terribly wrong. Help!

Doug Harvey, Northampton

I always like to do my bit to save the sanity of our readers. The solution to your problem also lies in the Profs drawer and is called ScreenMode. Double-click on this and you will be presented with a requester. In this requester will be a gadget called colours which can be used to alter the number of colours on the Workbench screen



▲ The glory of choice: Optique 556, the Picasso IV

Click Save to make the changes permanent. If you have an unexpanded Amiga, it is probably best to use only 8 or 16 colours; any more and the screen will consume too much memory and will slow the system down. With a fast processor 64 colours in AGA is quite useable.

A1200 and gfx cards?

I have seen many adverts in your magazine for Zorro slot graphics cards and I am considering buying one. However, I have several questions and problems which I hope you can answer. Currently, I have an A1200 with a GVP 88030 accelerator (+FPU), a CD-ROM drive and a Zip drive (both SCSI connected via a Squirrel) and an old Commodore 1084S monitor. The CD drive and Zip are installed in a HiQ mini tower, but I have no Zorro slots.

1. Do graphics cards have to be connected via Zorro slots, or can you get cards which can be connected to the parallel or serial port or even SCSI?
2. Can I buy a Zorro slot to put into my tower case to use a graphics card? If so, where can I get hold of one, and how much will it cost?
3. Which graphics card is better - Cybervision 64/3D or Picasso IV?
4. How much do they cost?
5. Will a graphics card fix the flickering experienced with my current monitor in interlaced screen modes? I have seen things called "flicker-fixers", will I have to buy one of those as well as a graphics card?
6. Will the graphics card improve the speed of all applications requiring complex graphics/screen modes (ie, Imagine, PPaint, Photogenics, Workbench and games such as TFX and Doom, or do I need special versions of the above titles)?
7. Finally, one question, not related to graphics cards. How can I get Workbench to run certain file types (such as MIDI, JFF, JPEG etc) I using particular programmes (such as

GMPlay, Visage etc) when I double click on the files' icons?

I have subscribed to your magazine for several years now, and I have to say I think it is the Best Amiga magazine. Thanks for putting excellent programmes on your cover CD's TFX, PPaint, Doom etc and keep up the good work too!

Lewis Boyd, Boleston

Thanks for the praise, Lewis. Now, to the questions!
1 & 2. All currently available Amiga graphics cards require a Zorro slot. This means you will need a 'big box' Amiga of some sort to use one, or, failing that, an A1200 in a tower case with a third-party Zorro busboard installed, say the Microtrak Z2 which has 5 Zorro slots.

This system is still quite expensive, costing £149.95 from Blittersoft, (especially as you will have the cost of the gfx card on top of that). Also note that it requires various connectors to be soldered and attached to the 1200 motherboard for full compatibility with Zorro graphics cards. Also, Eyetech (01642 713185) sell an adaptor for £99.95 which allows a single Zorro card to be plugged into an A1200.

However, things are about to change: phase 5 have a graphics card in development which plugs directly into their PPC accelerators (thus not requiring Zorro); and Ateco Concepts are developing an alternative, non-standard and cheaper bus interface system for the A1200 complete with a range of their own cards.

including a graphics card, Pixel64. Both these systems should be ready for release soon.

3 & 4. It is a matter of personal choice which card you think is better. Personally, I prefer the Picasso IV. The Picasso IV costs £249.95 and is available from Blittersoft (01908 261466). It is more expensive, but is based

around a more modern chipset, there is a useful range of plug-in modules, such as a 16bit sound card, a video encoder and TV module, and it has a built in flicker fixer. The Cybervision64/3D costs £144 from White Knight (01920 822321). It does require an external scan doubler but, on the plus side, features a 3D graphics engine - which is sadly under-used on the Amiga.

5. The Picasso IV has a built-in flicker-fixer and so can display all Amiga screenmodes and its own modes on an SVGA monitor. The Cybervision requires an external Scandoubler module to be able to display native Amiga screenmodes.

6. Yes. You will notice a big increase in speed especially for software which requires deep screen modes. Not only can gfx cards manipulate images faster than AGA but, by taking the load off the AGA chipset, they also leave more system cycles for the CPU. Not all software is compatible with gfx card screenmodes - for example, a large number of games are not - but most of the software you mentioned above will benefit greatly from a gfx card display.

7. You might try the utility called IDER which is used on our cover CDs. It can be found in the drawer CDSupport/Essentials.

VR Amiga (reprise)?

I have a boxed Mattel Powerglove here which I've only used a couple of times since purchase in 1991. It is complete with all cables, glove, instruction book and sensors for TV. I'd Karl Gronenberg or indeed anyone else for that matter is interested they can email me at this address: ian.fletcher@severed.oxford.com

Tristan Fletcher, via e-mail



▲ Option two: The Cybervision 64/3D

Save my Overdrive!

I'm writing with a long overdue question, as my A1200 has remained unexpanded for too long.

The only additions to it at the moment are an extra 4Mb of RAM, and a 540Mb Overdrive hard drive - which seemed like a good idea at the time but now CD-ROMs and modems are getting cheap (and essential) it doesn't seem quite so clever. So, without wasting my existing hard drive, how can I best fit a CD-ROM and modem, preferably with the minimum cost and hassle, with my PCMCIA slot already in use?

I notice the Eyetech CDPUS advertised in your magazine which leaves this slot free - how do those work and are they any good? And have you any suggestions regarding modems, ie, fast serial devices that won't mean binning my Overdrive?

I may be asking too much, but I don't want to start all over again with a new hard drive, as that would leave me even less money to spend on other bits and pieces. I do hope that you can help me, otherwise I will just have to continue forsaking the A1200 while I save up for my next generation Amiga.

Steve Trower, Works

You may have become attached to your Overdrive, but I'll think you'll find that you do not strictly need it. If you open it up, you will find a 3.5" IDE drive inside. This drive can be mounted inside your A1200 and connected to the internal IDE interface. Eyetech (01642 713185) can supply you a kit for this.

You will then have your PCMCIA slot free for more useful things. For example, you could then use one of the double-sized CD-ROM drives with PCMCIA

How to write to Q&A

You can send your queries (or a good tech tip if you have one) to Q&A, CU Amiga Magazine, 37-39 Millharbour, Isle of Dogs, London E14 9TZ or preferably e-mail: q+a@cu-amiga.co.uk. We can accept letters or text files on floppy disk. Please do not send an SAE

WE CANNOT RESPOND DIRECTLY TO QUERIES BY POST OR OVER THE PHONE OR E-MAIL, and cannot answer every Q&A we are sent. Sorry. We do appreciate that you may have a serious problem and until Amiga International re-opens a UK office you may have no where else to turn, but we get so many questions we simply don't have the time or resources to answer them all. We do our best to use letters in Q&A that answer most common problems, so even if your own question is not answered you may find an appropriate solution here

interface that Power Computing (01234 851500) sells for £70.95.

The CDPlus system from Eyetech also connects to the A1200's Internal IDE interface. It consists of a CD-ROM drive, a 4-way buffered device, all the necessary cables and driver software.

The CD-ROM drive and your hard drive could both be connected up with this. Eyetech do a quad speed CDPlus system for £80.95. The options for a fast serial device are either the PortJunior or the Surf Squirrel. The PortJunior which is available also from Eyetech for £39.95, has claimed transfer rates of up to 460Kbaud and plugs into your A1200's internal clock header.

The Surf Squirrel is available from Hisoft (01525 718181) for £99.95. It combines a SCSI2 interface with a fast serial device with claimed rates of up to 230Kbaud. If you shop around, you may find a cheap deal on a Surf Squirrel and CD-ROM drive package - which would solve your problems in one.

A to Z



I is for incredibly intelligent, which happens to describe John Kennedy. Or is that irritating and irrational?

I is for...

info

The file containing the graphical design of the icon as well as it's position and type. For a file to have an icon, it must have an associated info file

icon

A graphical representation of a file program, directory and so on. We take it all for granted now, but when the Amiga first came out this was all cutting-edge stuff. We owe it all the work at Xerox labs too, as Apple, Microsoft and just about everybody else "borrowed" from their research

IconEdit

A utility program which is supplied as part of the Workbench suite. Its purpose is to edit or create icons. The version supplied with the A1200 and A4000 Workbench 3 is slightly buggy and so earlier versions or public domain programs are usually a better idea

icontrol

Launches a program which sets up some obscure (but useful) features present in Workbench 3 and up. You can use it to change the screendrag hotkey (usually the left Amiga key) and re-position the menus in larger-than-the-screen Workbench displays

The Avoid Flicker option is for use with Productivity mode and prevents any background screen revealed from operating in interleaved mode. Mode Promotion will try and open all new screens in Productivity mode - it doesn't work with all programs, or with games

IconX

An AmigaDOS command which makes it possible to associate your own scripts with icons. Give the icon you create IconX as its default tool and the same name as your script. Now double-clicking the icon launches the script

IDE

A hard disk interface, fitted as standard to A600 A1200 and A4000 computer systems. IDE hard drives are cheap, and faster - ideal for

personal computers in fact. They are available in 2.5" and 3.5" sizes. The A1200 and A600 computers were designed to house 2.5" drives, but it's possible to squeeze 3.5" drives in too.

The Amiga IDE interface can also support ATAPI compatible CD-ROM drives, with suitable cabling and driver software

ii

An AmigaDOS command which tests a condition, causing different actions to happen depending on the result.

IFF

Interchangeable File Format, the Amiga's standard for saving information to disk. IFF files are based on the notion of "chunks" inside a "wrapper" and different chunks can store different types of information. A four-character name at the head of each chunk describes its contents to the program loading it. IFF files can contain pictures, sound, text and almost any other kind of data

ILBM

Interleaved BitMap, just one of the type of IFF chunks in common use. ILBM files contain images

Info

AmigaDOS command which lists information on the disks currently installed. Used either by itself or with the name of a device, such as info dhd

InitPrinter

Mostly useless AmigaDOS command which sends a reset command to a connected printer

Input

Starts the preference program which controls mouse speed, key board repeat rates, click speeds and so on. Make sure you select "British" from the keyboard type. Unless you're not using a British keyboard of course

Install

An AmigaDOS program which makes a floppy disk "bootable". Apply it after formatting to make a disk which is capable of starting up

your Amiga. Of course, you'll also need to copy the usual Workbench/AmigaDOS files to it

Interface

Anything which connects two different items of hardware, software or almost anything. A hard drive interface is the hardware which allows a computer to communicate with the disk drive. A User interface is the collection of buttons, windows and controls which allow a person to use a program.

Interlace

Often simply referred to as a "flickering" screen mode. Interlaced screen displays work in the same way as an ordinary TV image, with two fields of information updating the display every 1/50th of a second. Unfortunately unlike a typical TV image, the Amiga's display contains lots of very sharply defined lines which makes the display appear to flicker

Try recording an interlaced display to video tape though and you'll get better results than using a non-interlaced display

Internal

Some key AmigaDOS commands are built into the Amiga's Kickstart ROM rather than existing as programs in the C: directory. These are called "Internal" programs. Enter Resident at a Shell for a complete list

Internet

The world-wide network of computer networks, capable of supporting electronic mail, Web pages and even moving video and sound

Intuition

The Amiga's Workbench system of icons, mouse pointer, windows and so on is collectively referred to as "Intuition". Quite a cool name really, although most people call it Workbench

Iprafs

A small program which automatically runs in the background. It is launched by the startup sequence. It copies values stored in ENV.sys and applies them to set up colours, screen resolutions and so on



Backchat

Back with the chat, it's what you might call a letters page. If you want to add your bile to the stew, write to the address below or email us at backchat@cu-amiga.co.uk

Backchat
CU Amiga
37-39 Millharbour
Isle of Dogs
London E14 9TZ

Listen up coders!

There is a lot of good software written for the Amiga by very talented people but (again gnpe mode) why do so many of those programs not include that small bit that allows the user to quit without having to reboot? It really annoys me that a potentially excellent piece of software is ruined by leaving out this important piece of coding. I can tell you here and now that I, for one, will never use a piece of software twice, let alone register it, if I cannot quit to Workbench or DOS.

I have full admiration for those people who write software just for the love of the Amiga and its users, often for very little or no recognition, but I cannot bring myself to admire their software if it does not contain a quit option. Thankfully, most software produced does allow the user to quit and it is those programmers who put that extra little bit of thought into their programs that make the Amiga the joy to use that it has always been (end gnpe mode).

Mark Crowley, via email

Obligatory car analogy

My friend owns a 1958 Volkswagen Beetle. It cost him £2000 four years ago and since then he has spent over £8000 pounds rebuilding it. It has an 1192cc engine which can pull the car to almost 60 mph, a cold uncomfortable interior, 6 volt

"I think it is time someone at Amiga Inc addressed this by making a real 'Amiga Office' package or something of the likes of Claris Works."

electronics, crossply tyres, a dodgy gearbox and you can't hear yourself think inside.

With the money he has spent on it, he could have had a nice Ford Fiesta with a 16 valve engine which could go 100 mph, a nice stereo (you get the idea). However! He doesn't want a Ford Fiesta! To him the Beetle is more than a car. It is not a mode of transport, it doesn't matter that it can't even reach the speed limit, that he can't listen to music in it, that it settles and grieves

as he drives it. That's not the point. The point is that it has character, a personality of its own that it runs well enough for him because he's not bothered about racing Escorts at the traffic lights. He is above that, a different breed of car owner, one who has his own tastes dictated by

what he knows he likes, not what is the latest trend. Anyone can spend £10,000 and own a Ford Fiesta but not everyone has the passion required to drive a Beetle.

To him there is no comparison because to him the Beetle and the Fiesta aren't even in the same class.

Sam Cooke, Cambridge, England.

Hint: if anyone else wants to get car-computer analogy into Backchat, work a Split Screen VW

Microsoft joke of the month

A Boeing 747 was making its approach for landing in Seattle when an electrical malfunction disabled all of the aircraft's electronic navigation and communications equipment. Due to the clouds and haze, the pilot could not determine the aircraft's position and course to steer to the airport.

The pilot saw a tall building, flew towards it, circled, drew a large sign and held it in the plane's window. The sign said "WHERE AM I?" in large letters. People in the tall building quickly responded to the aircraft, drawing a large sign that read "YOU ARE IN AN AEROPLANE". The pilot looked at his map, determined the course to Seattle airport and landed the plane safely.

After they had landed the co-pilot asked the pilot how that sign helped determine the plane's position. The pilot responded "I knew that had to be the Microsoft building because similar to their helpiness, they gave me a technically correct but completely useless and crap answer."

Duncan MacDonald, Swansea

Charlie, wheeze, fruk fruk etc... Come on, you can do better than that. Send your Microsoft jokes to "Gates Gags" at the normal CU Amiga address. The best will be printed each month in this, our brand new Microsoft gag section. Assuming we get some good ones that is.

Van into the equation somewhere along the line to boost your chances of publication.

Amiga Office

This is the first time in my life I've written to a magazine and this time I really want to be heard.

Everybody knows that something needs to be done fast for the Amiga platform to survive. I look at the magazines, see the rents on the Net, read the speeches and everything but it seems to me a lot of people lose the perspective of things: computers are supposed to be useful. I don't see what is interesting in having a rocket engine on the desk if you don't have a use for it.

One thing I see right now is a very serious lack of concrete application software for the Amiga. I see great packages: WordWorth, Final Writer, Turbo Calc, but no real cohesion between them. I think it is time someone at Amiga Inc addressed this, by making a real "Amiga Office" package or something of the likes of Claris Works. Tons of people don't

Sam supporters club

Part 1

Dear John

I read your article in this month's mag on the Sam Coupe with interest, not because I had one, but because I was one of those Spectrum+3 users who considered it as a possible upgrade path back in 91. However, lack of funds and luck made me wait until I could afford my A1200.

I was digging around in a packing case and found the enclosed "Your Sinclair" Spectrum magazine. If you look on page 71 there is a bit of a rave review on the Sam. Hmm, looks like a fair out-break of optimism supported by a large amount of artistic licence in the wordage. After reading that a bloke could get a bit mis and paranoid about his favourite computer today. Never mind if Gateway 2000 sink the Amiga. I've still got the old Speccy+3 to fall back on. Oh yes, I still have it.

Please keep the mag and show it around the (ahem) younger members of the pub. Telling them to show them how it was in those days.

M Domoney (Mikdom), Lincs

Part 2

Never before have I been moved to tears by words written about a machine (apart from when Wordworth suggested "myelgia" instead of "my Amiga"). John Kennedy's Techno Tragedy article about the Sam Coupe moved me so much that I scrambled up to my loft and got out all my old issues of Your Sinclair. Oh how I laughed at the excessive use of

want or need more than that from computers.

On a more technical side, the Amiga is years behind the PC in "visual development" looks. I think it is essential that something like Visual Basic or Delphi comes to the Amiga to get more software going. Imagine the power of the Amiga combined with the ease of programming a visual language, and don't forget that the bulk of PC develop-

phrases like "Blintz", "Lummoxes" and "Specchunt", but most of all the YS motto "It's crap, in a funky skillo sort of way". Oh how many more techno tragedies stowed up at me from the pages of The Spectrum, the +D drive, the list is endless.

Commerth 1 to the August 1991 issue, in the Tipshop section was a letter written by a Mr G Sweeney. Not the same G Sweeney from March's CU Amiga letters page? Surely not? Anyway, G's letter was referred to (throughout the letter) to for Kendo Warriors doesn't work so don't try it, or people will laugh at you in the street! And yes, I still have all the magazines from June 91 to September 93. I'm not sad, and I have loads of friends, honest.

Captain Kumsquet, Andromeda

Seeing as that magazine was published by A.N. Other Company, we've re-printed a bit of Sinclair User, which was always much better than Your Sinclair anyway. Oh, and since when, Captain Kumsquet, do you get a Luton poemtrick on letters sent from Andromeda?

ment is done with those languages today.

I also think that there are plenty of uses for the Amiga OS beyond the machine itself, and I cannot help but rejoice on the low development platform costs.

I also agree with Andrew Korn on e-kids' Amiga. As long as it is well done (88040, 16MB and a CD minimum), it will catch on.

Just my 025

Francoise Leandry, via email

Amiga UK, OK?

I'd like to make some comments on Amiga Inc's intention.

I agree with all of the April '98 issue's Points of View, especially about having a UK office. It is in the UK that the Amiga has had all the best software and hardware companies and I urge you and your readers to bombard Amiga Inc with emails and letters telling them "We want a UK office!"

2. I also think that Amiga should make a new machine THEMSELVES and get it into the shops now! Third parties aren't big enough to risk it themselves and the Amiga isn't going anywhere until they do. If they do the third parties will follow their example. Again I urge you (as the biggest selling Amiga mag) and your readers to tell Amiga Inc this as I think it's very important and

"There is of course a school of thought that says I must be mad to spend good cash on a dying medium."

should be addressed by Amiga. 3. Reading a recent issue of Official PlayStation Magazine they said "With the Amiga gone, software publishers are wondering where new generation programmers will come from, because PCs are too expensive and don't have the bedroom programmer effect". Why don't Amiga Inc capitalise on this and do some sort of deal with Sony to have cheap PlayStation development software distributed with new Amigas so would-be programmers can then cheaply program a PlayStation game and then take it to an official Amiga or Sony dealer and have the CD out for a few quid. I think this would be excellent publicity for the Amiga as all the PlayStation mags would no doubt cover the story. As before I urge you and your readers to email Amiga Inc, Sony and the PlayStation mags.

Tej Hussain, Leeds

Slapped wrists

It is very annoying when trying to follow your otherwise good tutorials to find that the text does not match with the screenshots or that the wrong pics are inserted on the page. Let's take a few examples

from the April '98 issue. PPaint tutorial Pt 3, Effect of deleting. The text does not match the pics - which is correct? Also pics 9 & 10 are identical - not much use to demonstrate the effect!

I also commented on pics in the Scale tutorial showing buttons not on my CD version of MM300 in a previous E-mail to Q & A. Disk loading instructions come in for their fair share of mishaps too. April's issue refers to Scale not Shapeshifter.

It's a pity that this sloppiness mars an otherwise excellent magazine. Just another 5% required.

John Thompson, Farnham

Well spotted John, it's not how it should be and we won't bother dealing out the excuses but will try even harder next time. Can we go now?

The Amiga problem

Having been a dedicated Amigan since 1988 when I bought my Speccy, I am becoming increasingly alarmed by the attitude currently prevailing that we are witnessing

the death of the Amiga.

I support wholeheartedly the view expressed by Andrew Korn in May's CU Amiga, that we must support developments by spending hard cash. During the last 12 months I have spent over £500 on hardware and software for my 1200, including a CD-ROM and a 1 GB hard drive. Even though these items have been disproportionately very expensive when compared to the vast PC market, I have deliberately stayed away from converting to the PC.

The main reason for this has been the cost of PC software. My hobby is graphics and in particular 3D and raytracing. The cost of many 3D packages for the PC is truly horrific!

There is of course a school of thought that says I must be mad to spend good cash on a dying medium and we see all too often in computer mags the recommendation to "buy a second hand 1200" as though it just isn't worth spending out on a new one.

The other advice given regarding the question of upgrading is "hang on a bit and see what the model 1230XZ is like before buying. There is always a good reason not to buy



anything as it will soon be out of date, but can you really put a figure on 'lost enjoyment'? Buy it, use it and enjoy it - to hell with the next stage of development!

People who rushed out and bought the first A1200s were rewarded by them catching fire. Those who bought 12 months latest were buying a great little machine with the problems ironed out, so should we rush at the latest thing which may not have been tried and tested?

The true Amigan does not want to be a computer 'owner' having to have the latest and latest gizmo. He/she is a computer 'user' who wants to buy the machine to do a specific job.

Support the Amiga, expand your machine with tried and tested hardware, look after the developers as they have looked after us and never mind what the next big gizmo will be. And remember: tomorrow will be yesterday in two days time!

John Hughes, Salisbury

Attitude problem?

In the May Points of View John Kennedy says that Amiga is an attitude, no more and no less. While I don't disagree that certain attitudes form much of the essence of Amiga I believe there is a bit more to it.

My assessment of what makes up the Amiga is that it is the attitudes (or expectations) plus a definite set of standards. The standards I believe are the embodiment of the attitudes. Standards ensure that things will work together and that things will be supported. The main thing the Wintel world lacks is good, reliable standards. The main thing the Mac world lacks is openness. The Amiga struck a good compromise between the two in the past, and is in the process of being revamped to do the same thing in the future. Amiga people want a system which is versatile and powerful while at the same time being friendly and reliable. We do not want to be dictated to by software or hardware nor yet the companies which manufacture them. We

want the computer to be our servant and not vice-versa. That is our attitude and our goal.

Donovan Reese, via email

Time for change

It seems there are two camps when it comes to the question of the future of the Amiga. One of these thinks that Amiga Inc should get tough, get a big budget from Gateway 2000 and take on Microsoft. The other camp wants the Amiga to retain its individual identity and become successful once more without chasing the lead set by Bill Gates.

This was backed up by the results of your Big Amiga Poll in the May issue. In your analysis of the results, this one in particular, you implied that it was "wishful thinking" to hope that anyone could budget Gates from his current position. While I respect your frank and

"Also, while it's hard to see how things could change, I bet that's what people thought about the Romans at the height of their dominance!"

honest comment (the last thing we need is a mag that's nothing more than an unofficial propaganda machine for Amiga Inc), I feel this isn't such a pipe dream after all.

Remember Gates and his empire came from humble beginnings. Also, while it's hard to see how

things could change, I bet that's what people thought about the Romans at the height of their dominance! Even though people went the hassle taken out of buying and using personal computers (something which has been exploited incredibly well by Gates) I think people will soon come around to the idea of having a choice.

OK, so the accountant who just wants to crunch numbers probably won't give a toss what machine or operating system he uses. However, even those who don't want to make their own decisions will ask the advice of someone else. This could be a friend, a technology journal or a salesman.

In the workplace, the computer systems people use are chosen by people who have a specific interest in information technology. It's these people who could be the linchpins in the potential upswing of the Amiga as a new platform. If it's

sold properly to IT buyers and systems analysts it could rapidly filter down into the high street and into the home on the back of their expert advice and also the plain fact that someone sitting at work in front of a computer that says 'AMIGA' on it is more likely to go for the same brand when looking for a home PC (that's PC meaning Personal Computer in this case, not a Windows box).

It might not happen this way. I'm certainly not saying that it will, but it's worth bearing in mind the fact that it could happen like this. Let's hope it does.

Lee Burgess, Kent

That's a good point Lee. One thing worth remembering is that technology comes and goes almost as regularly as the seasons - strange how we're still stuck in the summer of 1985 then isn't it?

To the Point...

Don't knock CDTV!

In the April issue of CU Amiga in the Backchat area, some bloke/bickers called 'Jaydee' wrote in asking if there would be any attention to the Amiga CDTV. CU replied with a basic 'no' stating that the CDTV was "obsolete technology". However, it may be old and obsolete, but it's still the only thing machine in the world that will successfully play my Nasa The 25th Century CD that I dearly love!

Hugo Wilkinson

That about sums up the usefulness of a CDTV in the late 1990s - or the early 1990s for that matter! Maybe next month's cover feature will be 101 things to do with a CDTV. Suggestions on a postcard to the usual address...

Digital cameras

Your digital camera feature in the May issue has convinced me I must have one! I'm hoping to get hold of one of the Olympus models when I've got enough cash together. I'll send you some snaps via email!

Gary Beech, via email

You do that Gary. We'll keep you posted of further developments on the digicam front. Take a look on page 64 of this issue for a review of Power Computing's offering which just missed last month's deadline.

More music

I've always found CU Amiga the best Amiga mag for music coverage, but recently there hasn't been much in your mag. Why not? We want more music coverage! How about getting Dex & Jonesey or Aphrodite to do a regular column? I'm hearing lots of positive things about Aphrodite recently with Macky Finn and Urban Takeover. Is he still using his Amiga?

Guy Shinkles, West Glamorgan

.....
CU Amiga reserves the right to edit letters so that they make sense, fit onto the page and don't ramble on too much.



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Points of View

Time for a few more opinions... please note that the views expressed here are not necessarily those of CU Amiga.



A word from our sponsor...

Last month had SBase4Pro on the cover disks and CD. We also had an advert from its developers, Mr Hardware, for people to buy manuals and other SBase4Pro related products. The text in the advert contained the sentence "Frankly, we think the other platforms are crap". Tony the editor advised Joe Rothman (Mr Hardware) that it sounded a bit unprofessional and that he might want to rephrase it. Joe Rothman disagreed! We liked his response so much we've printed it here for public consumption.

I hear you about the professionalism issue, but I'd like to keep the word crap. I've noticed a very strange thing that Amiga owners do and in this case I want to set a good (bad) example. I want people to know I think it's alright to get indignant and perhaps to not be so polite when it comes to other platforms. After all, no one treats Amiga owners fairly. No one gives us any notice or treats us with any respect.

I believe that Amiga owners are much more intelligent than the average PC owner. Most of us bought an Amiga because we looked at all the other computers and decided that the Amiga was best. Most PC owners bought them because someone else had one, because they "needed" one to run a certain program because their school boss, or accountant insisted upon it. Or they bought them because they wanted "PC compatibility". The point is that none

of them had a reason that was based on research. Any research that was done was to decide which clone to buy, not which computer type to buy.

Kids who buy video games are more intelligent and in tune with reality than PC owners. Kids can see the difference between the game consoles and they don't care if their old games are rendered useless by

their new purchases. PC owners think they have made a wise choice because they have made the choice of the masses, but unfortunately they are just fooling themselves. There isn't even any

"I use the word crap because I'm polite enough not to say something worse, but not polite enough to care if I hurt some PC users feelings."

real compatibility. Just replace everything once a year and you can keep going with a PC. I have Amiga programs that were written in 1986 that still work just fine today, only faster!

The intelligent Amiga owners have a tendency to treat the computer industry with the same

side does that for us. I know it sounds pretty strange, but I wish we would just treat the other camp with a lot less respect.

How else will they ever begin to realise their mistake? They are using braindead computers they can't stand, and subsequently not enjoying their experience, but we're too polite to tell them how dumb they've been. The PC market is one that's upside

down. People buy PCs to run programs that aren't available for other computers. If clothing manufacturers started making clothes in colours no one liked, we wouldn't buy them. But write us inferior software and dictate the computer type we need to own to use it and we'll make you rich. Very strange!

The really interesting thing is if you substitute cars for computers suddenly the rules change. Just about everyone has a favourite car. Most of us have good reasons for liking one car over another. No one is afraid to give their opinion or ignore someone else's advice.

Faster is not necessarily always better. Comfort is just as important as style. Gas manufacturers don't ever tell you what kind of car you should buy and if they did I think we would have a fit. Turn the discussion to computers again and most people turn into sheep.

Sooooo, I use the word crap because I'm polite enough not to say something worse, but not polite enough to care if I hurt some PC users feelings. ■

Joe Rothman is head of Mr Hardware.

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philosophical point of view as they treat equality

between the races or freedom of religion. They tend to go out of their way to defend the PC owner's rights just like they would defend a battered wife. No one on the other

"I want people to know I think it's alright to get indignant and perhaps to not be so polite when it comes to other platforms."

Sleeping with the...?



When John Kennedy used these hallowed pages to suggest Windows CE for a future Amiga operating system, he was taking his life into his own hands. I hope I'll get a little less in the way of abuse by suggesting that rather than sleeping with the enemy, the Amiga ought to just get married to an old bedfellow.

We've been emulating Macs on the Amiga for years. Why not? It works well far better than emulating PCs, because of the family

similarity with Mac hardware. AGA doesn't do a great job of MAC screenmodes, but a graphics card will solve that. Of course the Mac beat us to PPC, but we should overcome that compatibility hurdle in the near future.

Things change, and while there is much debate on the ideal future shape of the Amiga, there are a few things which are now settled. We're going PPC. We need modern graphics cards. Whatever else happens, these two can be counted on. Of course this means closing the remaining gap between Amiga and Mac hardware - Mac OS could run on Amiga hardware. And, with a few qualifiers, the reverse would be true. Assuming we get a PPC version of Amiga OS, why not run it on Mac hardware?

Microsystem's Draco soldered along without the custom chips reasonably well, but the need for AGA compatibility gets less and less. Just so long as we get drivers for a few PCI cards, anything capable of opening a retargetable screen could work

"Just so long as we get drivers for a few PCI cards, anything capable of opening a retargetable screen could work fine."

fine. Older software and AGA games would choke, but that's about it. With the growing popularity of AHI sound will become less and less of a problem.

Recent changes in company policy at Apple might make this quite acceptable to them. As Amiga Inc. are concentrating on OS development and standards design for third party manufacture. Apple have moved away from this model to concentrate on making money out of hardware sales.

So why shouldn't Amiga Inc. and Apple join forces? Apple could sell more hardware, as it could sell it into the Amiga market, and the Amiga would have a large ready made supply of hardware readily available. The same hardware could be offered with a choice of ROM boards depending on whether it was an Amiga or a Mac the purchaser

was after or ever with a dual ROM for a multi-platform. It would mean we'd benefit from Mac hardware developments while they benefit from ours.

Companies like Village Interactive could concentrate their resources on hardware which ran on both platforms instead of having to do ranges for Macs and Amigas, and the Mac guys could get hold of a phased multi-PPC prebox.

I know that some of you think that the Amiga is all about custom hardware, but it still can be - why not share it with the Apple guys, while benefiting from their custom stuff too?

With Mr. Gates so dominant in the market, a strategic alliance between the Amiga and Apple could only be a good thing. ■

Andrew Kerr is Deputy Editor of CB Amiga

Software Piracy on the Amiga

A regular occurrence in the Amiga newsgroups is former Amiga users asking for software to run on UAE "not knowing" that Amiga software is still copyrighted, people shamelessly asking for pirated software, and people revealing themselves in comments about software that only apply to cracked versions.

All this has been discussed in the newsgroups, sometimes by the authors themselves. For example, by FFI News author Thorsten Stockmaier when he got angry at the number of pirated copies - some people mailed him bug reports using pirated keyfiles (you can tell by the header). Someone even flamed Angelo Schmidt because he had problems with a pirated version of her tool DiskKey - cracked versions may damage your disks.

Since there aren't many big commercial developers left, crackers have hit shareware authors and smaller companies hard, people who often have to

earn their living from the small numbers they sell. Most shareware authors are affected by such activities, including myself. Recently someone sent me an email where he stated:

"Do you have any reports about fake keys for your program? One man told me that he can get me SuperView key."

"I decided to check my key. I think, you must make it more complicated. I know that now it is a bit complicated to change key-code. But in future (SViewNG2) make some good coding here."

Unfortunately, one can't protect programs against experienced crackers. You can make the protection difficult enough for the average user and programmer, but if someone with professional knowledge tries hard, he will find a way.

If someone wants to fake keyfiles of my software or crack it, he has to put some work into it. There is no excuse and no "oops, it was just accidental, I couldn't help". Surely that person must know that

"I prefer to spend my time on programming and improving my programs rather than thinking about new methods against software pirates."

he or she is going to destroy a software development.

What should I do against such individuals? They'll never learn. They destroyed most of the Amiga's game and application market. In the past, and they continue to do that for some strange kind of "fame".

Nevertheless there's a price they will have to pay for it, more and more programmers and software houses will have to stop developing for Amiga, because it doesn't pay, and in many cases they can't earn their living any more.

I prefer to spend my time on programming and improving my programs rather than thinking about new methods against software pirates - experience shows that such efforts mostly affect the honest users and decrease overall product comfort/quality.

Someone recently mentioned a wise saying: "locks are only there to

keep the 'honest' people out, as criminals have all the tools to gain entry". Feel free to spread the word of this article (instead of keyfiles of my programs) to every cracker you know out there - if there's a bit of brain and real fame left, they may like to consider it.

My last word - "though I can't say it better than Miami author Holger Kruse did after the recent Miami Trojan issue - one never knows what additions a cracked program may contain. The same goes to normal application software (eg. certain Telnet clients) suddenly released by well known cracking groups.

Spread the word, not the disk and don't trust the pirates! ■

Andreas R. Kleinert is author of the AX datatypes and many other well-known shareware programs

TECHNO TRAGEDIES

The BSB Squarial

Back in the old days - before The Simpsons was known by all - some houses had little baking trays attached to their walls... Why?

In the late 80's and early 90's, the British television viewing public were in a quandary. Suddenly they were being told that "terrestrial" television was old hat and the future was in the sky - to the East in fact, by about 19 degrees. Thanks to satellites such as Astra and Macropolo, broadcasting was coming from space, offering sporting events, movies and real competition to the old fashioned ground based terrestrial stations.

The two rival services which were fighting for the UK market were Rupert Murdoch's Sky broadcasting, and BSB - British Satellite Broadcasting. BSB had the blessing of the UK government, and more importantly for us, it had the "squarial". A horrible new word it might have been, but squarials were relatively discrete little units compared to the giant ocular monstrosities we happily bolt to our houses these days.

The black, flat little antennae looked like it was going to usher in the age of hi-tech satellite TV to a country only just getting used to the fact that their TVs now could pick up Channel Four if there was nothing else on.

BSB tried to do everything the "proper way", using a special picture transmission format called

D-MAC. D-MAC was a high quality system, but it was also quite complicated. The decoder boxes were expensive to produce and it was for this and various other reasons that the launch of the BSB service was delayed and at least one national launch was aborted.

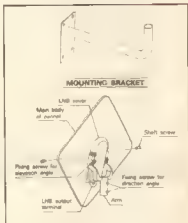
Meanwhile, Sky operated theirs using the considerably cheaper PAL system. No-one was quite sure if the PAL broadcasts would work from satellite, but they did and they worked well enough for viewers to be happy. Of course, it was totally incompatible with the BSB system, and no-one wanted to have to install two satellite dishes and sit two black-box decoders under the television sets. The public had to make a choice.

The fact that Sky pushed its way onto the market and was running a year before BSB was instrumental in building up a base of subscribers. Murdoch's media empire was able to push Sky as the dominant standard. However, virtually giving away the satellite receiver kits was costing both companies a lot of money, and it became obvious that the market wasn't big enough for two rival systems. In 1990, Sky and BSB merged to become British Sky Broadcasting.

The D-MAC transmissions were stopped, and the squarial became a useless piece of black plastic mounted on outside walls.

The squarial lives on

OK, so it's not really fair to call the squarial itself a failure - it was the manner in which it was implemented by BSB which killed it off. The squarial still works well as an antenna. I've seen DIY electronic projects which use the squarial as a local radio transmission system and there is at least one com-



▲ Of course, you may find it of more use as a handy coat-hook.

mercial system which uses squarials to beam video signals up to 75 feet using low powered transmitters.

The receivers too can be modified to work with D2-MAC satellite systems and there are many enthusiasts in the UK who use the modified BSB set up to watch signals from the myriad of orbiting transmitters hovering above the earth.

If you are interested in finding out more about the squarial and how it can be given a new lease of life, see the excellent web sites below which detail the rise and fall of the squarial. ■

John Kennedy

Web resources

<http://www.meldrum.co.uk/mhp/testcard/bab.html>
<http://homepage.eurobell.co.uk/collinmc/bab.html>
<http://www.mbarber.demon.co.uk/sky-birth.htm>

The European Satellite User Group
 Subscription details - UK 01227 265222



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